

PRODUCING AND MAINTAINING PROFESSIONAL IDENTITIES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

Megan Gibson

DipTeach (Early Childhood), BEd (Early Childhood), MEd

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Centre for Learning Innovation
Faculty of Education
Queensland University of Technology

2013

Keywords

category/maintenance, child care, discourse analysis, early childhood, early childhood teachers, identities, ironic categories, policy, preservice teacher education, professionalism

Abstract

This study is an inquiry into early childhood teacher professional identities. In Australia, workforce reforms in early childhood include major shifts in qualification requirements that call for a university four-year degree-qualified teacher to be employed in child care. This marks a shift in the early years workforce, where previously there was no such requirement. At the same time as these reforms to quality measures are being implemented, and requiring a substantive up skilling of the workforce, there is a growing body of evidence through recent studies that suggests these same four-year degree-qualified early childhood teachers have an aversion to working in child care. Their preferred employment option is to work in the early years of more formal schooling, not in before-school contexts. This collision of agendas warrants investigation. This inquiry is designed to investigate the site at which advocacy for higher qualification requirements meets early childhood teachers who are reluctant to choose child care as a possible career pathway.

The key research question for this study is: *How are early childhood teachers' professional identities currently produced?* The work of this thesis is to problematise the early childhood teacher in child care through a particular method of discourse analysis. There are two sets of data. The first was a key early childhood political document that read as a “moment of arising” (Foucault, 1984a, p. 83). It is a political document which was selected for its current influence on the early childhood field, and in particular, workforce reforms that call for four-year degree-qualified teachers to work in before-school contexts, including child care. The second data set was generated through four focus group discussions conducted with preservice early childhood teachers. The document and transcripts of the focus groups were both analysed as *text*, as conceptualised by Foucault (1981).

Foucault's work spans a number of years and a range of philosophical matters. This thesis draws particularly on Foucault's writings on discourse, power/knowledge, regimes of truth and resistance. In order to consider the production of early childhood teachers' professional identities, the study is also informed by identity theorists, who have worked on gender, performativity and investment (Davies,

2004/2006; McNay, 1992; Osgood, 2012; Walkerdine, 1990; Weedon, 1997). The ways in which discourses intersect, compete and collide produce the subject (Foucault, 1981) and, in the case of this inquiry, there are a number of competing discourses at play, which produce the early childhood teacher.

These particular theories turn particular lenses on the question of professional identities in early childhood, and such a study calls for the application of particular methodologies. Discourse analysis was used as the methodological framework, and the analysis was informed by Foucauldian concepts of discourse. While Foucault did not prescribe a form of discourse analysis as a method, his writings nonetheless provide a valuable framework for illuminating discursive practices and, in turn, how people are affected, through the shifts and distribution of power (Foucault, 1980a).

The treatment used with both data sets involved redescription. For the policy document, a technique for reading *document-as-text* applied a genealogical approach (Foucault, 1984a). For the focus groups, the process of redescription (Rorty, 1989) involved reading *talk-as-text*. As a method, redescription involves describing “lots and lots of things in new ways until you have created a pattern of linguistic behaviour which will tempt the new generation to adopt it” (Rorty, 1989, p. 9). The development and application of categories (Davies, 2004/2006) built on a poststructuralist theoretical framework and the literature review informed the data analysis method of discourse analysis. Irony provided a rhetorical and playful tool (Haraway, 1991; Rorty, 1989), to look to how seemingly opposing discourses are held together. This opens a space to collapse binary thinking and consider seemingly contradictory terms in a way in which both terms are possible and both are true. Irony resists the choice of one or the other being right, and holds the opposites together in tension.

The thesis concludes with proposals for new, ironic categories, which work to bring together seemingly opposing terms, located at sites in the field of early childhood where discourses compete, collide and intersect to produce and maintain early childhood teacher professional identities. The process of mapping these discourses goes some way to investigating the complexities about identities and career choices of early childhood teachers. The category of “the cost of loving” captures the collision between care/love, inherent in child care, and new discourses of investment/economics. Investment/economics has not completely replaced

care/love, and these apparent opposites were not read as a binary because both are necessary and both are true (Haraway, 1991). They are held together in tension to produce early childhood teacher professional identities.

The policy document under scrutiny was *New Directions*, released in 2007 by the then opposition ALP leader, Kevin Rudd. The claim was made strongly that the “economic prosperity” of Australia relies on investment in early childhood. The arguments to invest are compelling and the neuroscience/brain research/child development together with economic/investment discourses demand that early childhood is funding is increased. The intersection of these discourses produces professional identities of early childhood teachers as a necessary part of the country’s economy, and thus, worthy of high status. The child care sector and work in child care settings are necessary, with children and the early childhood teacher playing key roles in the economy of the nation. Through *New Directions* it becomes sayable (Foucault, 1972/1989) that the work the early childhood teacher performs is legitimated and valued. The children are produced as “economic units”. A focus on what children are able to contribute to the future economy of the nation re-positions children and produces these “smart productive citizens”, making future economic contribution. The early childhood teacher is produced through this image of a child and “the cost of loving” is emphasised.

A number of these categories were produced through the readings of the document-as text and the talk-as-text. Two ironic categories were read in the analysis of the transcripts of the focus group discussions, when treated as talk-as-text data: the early childhood teacher as a “heroic victim”; and the early childhood teacher as a “glorified babysitter”.

This thesis raises new questions about professional identities in early childhood. These new questions might go some way to prompt re-thinking of some government policy, as well as some aspects of early childhood teacher education course design. The images of children and images of child care provide provocations to consider preservice teacher education course design. In particular, how child care, as one of the early childhood contexts, is located, conceptualised and spoken throughout the course. Consideration by course designers and teacher educators of what discourses are privileged in course content —what discourses are diminished or silenced—would go some way to reconceptualising child care within preservice

teacher education and challenging dominant ways of speaking child care, and work in child care. This inquiry into early childhood teachers' professional identities has gone some way to exploring the complexities around the early childhood teacher in child care. It is anticipated that the significance of this study will thus have immediate applicability and relevance for the Australian early childhood policy landscape. The early childhood field is in a state of rapid change, and this inquiry has examined some of the disconnects between policy and practice. Awareness of the discourses that are in play in the field will continue to allow space for conversations that challenge dominant assumptions about child care, work in child care and ways of being an early childhood teacher in child care.

Publications

Gibson, M. (2013, accepted). "I want to educate school age children": Producing early childhood teacher professional identities. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 14(2).

Conference Presentations

Gibson, M. (2009, November), "*When I am a 'qualified' teacher, I want to educate school age children*": *The rights of children of all ages to qualified teachers*. Paper presented at Honoring the Child, Honoring Equity 9, Centre for Equity, Innovation in Early Childhood, University of Melbourne.

Gibson, M. (2010, October). *Producing and maintaining professional identities in early childhood education and care*. Paper presented at the Reconceptualising Early Childhood Education (RECE) Conference, Dalton, USA.

Gibson, M. (2012, April). "*Love is all you need*"... *discursive constructions of professional identities in early childhood education and care*. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Annual Meeting, Vancouver.

Table of Contents

Keywords	i
Abstract	ii
Publications	vi
Conference Presentations	vi
Table of Contents	vii
List of Figures	xi
List of Tables	xii
List of Abbreviations.....	xiii
Statement of Original Authorship	xiv
Acknowledgements	xv
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Purpose of the Research.....	3
1.1.1 Early childhood in Australia	3
1.1.2 Early childhood policy.....	6
1.2 Research Questions	9
1.3 Theoretical Framework and Research Design	9
1.4 Key Terms.....	12
1.4.1 Early childhood.....	12
1.4.2 Early childhood teacher	12
1.4.3 Child care.....	13
1.5 Ethics and Research Limitations.....	13
1.6 Organisation of Thesis	13
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	15
2.1 Early Childhood	16
2.1.1 Education and care.....	17
2.1.2 Children	28
2.1.3 Teachers/workforce	34
2.2 Professionalism.....	45
2.2.1 A genealogy of professionalism	45
2.2.2 Discourses of professionalism	47
2.2.3 Regulating the professional	49
2.2.4 Gendering the early childhood professional	50
2.3 Preservice Teacher Education.....	52
2.3.1 The nature of preservice teacher education	53
2.3.2 From technician to “reflexivity”	55
2.4 Identities.....	56
2.4.1 The <i>good</i> early childhood teacher.....	57
2.4.2 The advocate-activist early childhood teacher: beyond being good	58
2.4.3 The entrepreneurial early childhood teacher.....	59
2.5 Chapter Summary	59
CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	61
3.1 Poststructuralism.....	62
3.2 Discourse	64

3.2.1	Interconnected discourses	67
3.2.2	Time/history-dominant discourses.....	68
3.2.3	Power/knowledge	70
3.2.4	Truth and regimes of truth	73
3.2.5	Resistance and normalisation.....	75
3.3	Identities.....	76
3.3.1	Further understandings of identities: holograms, nomadic identities and cyborgs	77
3.3.2	Gender and identities	80
3.3.3	Performativity	81
3.3.4	Investment in identities	82
3.4	Category Maintenance	83
3.5	Chapter Summary	84
CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY		87
4.1	Research question	88
4.2	Theory and Methodology: the Links.....	88
4.3	Methodology	89
4.4	Discourse Analysis.....	90
4.4.1	Principles of method	92
4.4.2	Discourse: from language to text	93
4.5	Research Design.....	94
4.5.1	Studies that informed my research design	95
4.6	Data.....	99
4.6.1	Data set one: document-as-text.....	100
4.6.2	Data set two: talk-as-text	101
4.6.3	Data management and analysis.....	105
4.6.4	Producing the subject.....	116
4.6.5	Disrupting binaries.....	116
4.6.6	Categories	117
4.6.7	Irony as a rhetorical tool	118
4.6.8	My position within the research.....	119
4.7	Rigour: Authenticity and Integrity	120
4.8	Research Ethics	122
4.9	Chapter Summary	123
CHAPTER 5: PRODUCING EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER PROFESSIONAL IDENTITIES THROUGH DOCUMENT-AS-TEXT: <i>NEW DIRECTIONS</i>		125
5.1	New Directions: A “moment of arising”.....	128
5.1.1	Election 2007	129
5.1.2	The political conditions for change: State–Commonwealth Government alignment ...	130
5.2	The Text.....	132
5.2.1	The cover	135
5.2.2	Key sections of document.....	137
5.3	Child as Subject	146
5.3.1	Child development.....	146
5.3.2	Neuroscience/brain research	148
5.3.3	Why not babies?	149
5.3.4	“Play-based learning”	151
5.3.5	“Smart productive citizens”	152
5.4	Child as Economic Unit	153
5.4.1	The economics of early childhood.....	155
5.4.2	Human capital theory.....	157
5.4.3	The cost of loving	158

5.5	Early Childhood: Care and/or Education	159
5.5.1	Quality	161
5.6	A “Workforce in Crisis” Needs Degree-qualified Early Childhood Teachers	163
5.7	Chapter Summary	165
CHAPTER 6: PRODUCING EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER PROFESSIONAL IDENTITIES THROUGH TALK-AS-TEXT: FOCUS GROUPS WITH PRESERVICE TEACHERS (PART 1)		167
6.1	Producing Images of Children	170
6.1.1	Children in “the most important years”—neuroscience/brain research	172
6.1.2	Children as competent and capable.....	180
6.1.3	Children as building relationships	182
6.1.4	Children learning through play	189
6.1.5	Images of children who need quality	194
6.2	Parents Who Do Not “Get it”	198
6.3	Producing Early Childhood Teacher Professional Identities as “Heroic Victim”	201
6.4	Chapter Summary	203
CHAPTER 7: PRODUCING EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER PROFESSIONAL IDENTITIES THROUGH TALK-AS-TEXT: FOCUS GROUPS WITH PRESERVICE TEACHERS (PART 2)		205
7.1	Producing Images of Child Care	206
7.1.1	Child care “for parents who need a service”	208
7.1.2	Child care “allows parents to go to work and support the economy”	211
7.1.3	Child care for “children to support our economy in the future”	213
7.1.4	Child care as “just babysitting”	214
7.1.5	Child care as “hard work”	217
7.1.6	“Shabby” working conditions in child care	219
7.1.7	“Love for children”	220
7.1.8	“Getting out of the child care area”	224
7.1.9	“An important job for children”	226
7.2	Child Care Qualifications and Positions	228
7.2.1	A child care Director without a qualification.....	228
7.2.2	The qualification hierarchy	230
7.2.3	Professional/not professional	231
7.2.4	“A distinct difference between child care workers and teachers”	231
7.2.5	“Why would you do it?”	232
7.2.6	Producing the specialist early childhood teacher	234
7.3	Producing Early Childhood Teacher Professional Identities as “Glorified Babysitter”	235
7.4	The Absence of Child as Economic Unit	237
7.5	Chapter Summary	240
CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS		243
8.1	Early Childhood Teachers’ Professional Identities	244
8.1.1	Document-as-text.....	245
8.1.2	Talk-as-text.....	246
8.1.3	Document and talk	251
8.2	Implications and Significance of Study	253
8.2.1	Negativity about child care and work in child care.....	254
8.2.2	Policy and preservice teachers’ talk mismatch	255
8.2.3	Qualifications.....	257
8.3	Future Research Directions	258
8.3.1	Policy	259
8.3.2	Early childhood preservice teacher education	259
8.3.3	Workforce	260

8.4 Chapter Summary	261
References	263
Appendices	293
Appendix A Criteria for Focus Groups	294
Appendix B Course Summary Sheet	295
Appendix C Focus Group Questions	297
Appendix D Schedule of Focus Group Meetings	298
Appendix E Focus Group Participants	299
Appendix F Start List of Constructs	300
Appendix G Preliminary Coding for Focus Group Data Analysis	301
Appendix H Example of Focus Group Data Analysis	302
Appendix I Extract of Transcript from Focus Group 3	303
Appendix J Participant Information and Consent Form	304
Appendix K Human Ethics Approval Certificate	307

List of Figures

<i>Figure 2.1.</i> Four nodal points in literature.	16
<i>Figure 2.2.</i> Critical periods for brain development.	27
<i>Figure 2.3.</i> Organisational structure of a child care centre.	42
<i>Figure 3.1.</i> Theoretical framework for study.	62
<i>Figure 4.1.</i> Two data sets.	107
<i>Figure 5.1.</i> Leximancer© image for <i>New Directions</i>	127
<i>Figure 5.2.</i> Graphic shared at a seminar called Investing in ECEC – The science, the policy, the cost.	130
<i>Figure 5.3.</i> The emergence of <i>New Directions</i>	132
<i>Figure 5.4.</i> Front cover of <i>New Directions</i>	133
<i>Figure 5.5.</i> Human capital theory calling for children as economic unit.	158
<i>Figure 6.1.</i> Leximancer© image for all four focus groups.	169
<i>Figure 6.2.</i> Producing early childhood teacher professional identities through talk of images of children.	172
<i>Figure 6.3.</i> Producing early childhood teacher professional identities as “heroic victim”.	202
<i>Figure 6.4.</i> Producing the early childhood teacher in child care as “heroic victim”.	203
<i>Figure 7.1.</i> Producing early childhood teacher professional identities through images of child care.	208
<i>Figure 7.2.</i> Producing early childhood teacher professional identities as “glorified babysitter”.	236
<i>Figure 7.3.</i> Producing the early childhood teacher in child care as “glorified babysitter”.	237
<i>Figure 8.1.</i> Lady Diana Spencer, “kindergarten teacher”	251

List of Tables

Table 2.1 <i>Legislation, Position Titles and Required Qualifications for Before-School Contexts, Including Child Care, in Queensland</i>	39
Table 2.2 <i>Legislation, Position Titles and Required Qualifications for Kindergarten/Preschool in Queensland</i>	39
Table 2.3 <i>Legislation, Position Titles and Required Qualifications for Primary School in Queensland</i>	40
Table 4.1 <i>Summary of Research that Informed my Research Design</i>	96
Table 4.2 <i>Summary of Data Analysis</i>	110
Table 5.1 <i>Table of Contents Generated for New Directions</i>	133
Table 5.2 <i>Headings in First Section of New Directions</i>	138
Table 5.3 <i>Headings in Second Section of New Directions</i>	141

List of Abbreviations

ALP	Australian Labor Party
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
DAP	Developmentally appropriate practices
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
ECEC	Early childhood education and care
EYLF	Early Years Learning Framework
NSW	New South Wales
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
QCT	Queensland College of Teachers
QLD	Queensland
QUT	Queensland University of Technology
RTO	Registered training organisation
VET	Vocational education and training

Statement of Original Authorship

The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted to meet requirements for an award at this or any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

Signature: QUT Verified Signature

Date: 22/03/2013

Acknowledgements

Throughout my life, my mum and dad have encouraged me to further my education. This is a value that I brought into the PhD journey and I thank them for this gift. It was with much sadness that my dad passed away during the completion of this thesis. My dad was very proud of my studies, and I have completed this PhD with him constantly in my thoughts.

Foremost, thanks for the completion of this thesis must go to my Principal Supervisor, Associate Professor Felicity McArdle. As my colleague, mentor and mate she has provided extraordinary encouragement at every stage. Felicity's wisdom has stretched my thinking to places I did not know existed and her humour has created relief. My Associate Supervisor, Professor Caroline Hatcher has been an immense support. Caroline's generosity in sharing her knowledge has extended my understandings, and added depth to this thesis, and for this, I am grateful. Both of these extraordinary women are inspirations to me. Together, Felicity and Caroline have been a formidable supervision team and the three of us have forged a unique bond. I thank them for 'producing' me as a PhD student.

The support from my employer, Queensland University of Technology (QUT), has been very much appreciated. A range of University and Faculty of Education initiatives, including the Early Career Academic Recruitment Development (ECARD) and Women in Research, have provided support for this doctoral research. Additionally, the Head of the School of Early Childhood, Professor Ann Farrell, has been a stalwart for this research. My colleagues and friends in the School of Early Childhood have provided much encouragement over these past years of PhD life, and for this, I am appreciative. Special thanks to Lyn Zollo and her husband Toni for their support.

The completion of this thesis was made smoother through a research fellowship from the Collaborative Research Network (CRN), a partnership between CSU, Monash and QUT. My particular thanks go to Professor Sue Grieshaber for her encouragement and support in securing this fellowship.

I would like to thank the preservice early childhood teachers who willingly and enthusiastically participated in the focus groups. Also, I wish to acknowledge the moderator of the focus groups, Heather McLay.

I extend heartfelt gratitude to my family and friends who have provided untiring support. My team of friends on “the spreadsheet” have been a great help and given me strength when it was needed.

My mum has provided invaluable support, nearly every day towards the end, to care for my children when “mummy needed to write her book”. Her practical assistance and encouragement have been extraordinary.

My husband Mark has patiently supported and loved me, even though he has endured the brunt of my grumpiness. I am so appreciative of his belief in me to complete this research.

And finally, thank you to our gorgeous children, Archie and Evie, for your unbelievable patience. Our regular disco sessions have kept me laughing and having fun. I hope there will be much more time to dance (and eat vegetables) in the future.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This research journey emerged through my experiences as an early childhood teacher, my observations of early childhood policy and, more recently, my work in teacher education. As a teacher, I have worked in a range of early childhood contexts, initially in lower primary school classrooms, then kindergarten/preschool and child care, both within my home state of Queensland, Australia, and other states in Australia. Although I enjoyed teaching in primary school, I also felt constrained by school structures. The school bell, set meal breaks, timetabled specialised lessons, and guidelines for time spent on individual subjects were hindrances that interrupted the program in my classroom. By contrast, when I worked in child care, there was a sense of liberation that these constraints had been lifted. The day had a more organic or natural flow, with the timetable determined by the children and staff together. This allowed for connections to be made across the day, week, month and longer, as ideas and thoughts were afforded time and space. Possibilities were opened to work with children and families in ways that were underpinned by flexibility and spontaneity. As a teacher, and later as a Director, I became knowledgeable about regulatory frameworks, and how to ensure compliance with these guidelines, while not allowing them to govern, or hinder, my daily work. At the time, there was no national or state-based curriculum for programming in before-school contexts in Queensland. In this work I constantly drew on my daily interactions with children, readings, conversations with colleagues, further study and connections made through professional associations. My 10 years of experience working in child care was immensely rewarding. I had a strong sense of “being” professional and experienced a high level of work satisfaction.

Early childhood policy has been integral to my work as an early childhood teacher, though this was particularly the case in child care because of the immediate impact of policy provision. Programming guidelines, building requirements, staffing models and funding arrangements were some of the policies that shaped daily work in early childhood.

In January 2007, the leader of the Australian Labor Party (ALP), at the time in opposition, the Hon. Kevin Rudd, spoke at a seminar about his vision for “Investing

in ECEC—the science, the policy, the cost” (Rudd & Macklin, 2007c) (The seminar and its relevance to this study is returned to in Chapter 5). Together with the ALP spokesperson for Families and Community Services, Jenny Macklin MP, Mr Rudd spoke with great enthusiasm for a new landscape of early childhood education and care (ECEC), one that would take into account brain research and the economic benefits of investing in the early years. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) document, *Starting Strong II* (OECD, 2006), was drawn upon heavily to provide snapshots of the “gross” under-expenditure in early years programs in Australia, and the dire consequences for our economy if this continued. Mr Rudd used a graph to illustrate how, of the 20 countries reviewed in this comparative study, the “wooden spoon award” for the second-lowest expenditure in the early years went to Australia. One of the key early childhood reform agendas outlined at that seminar, as part of a broader “education revolution” strategy, was to encourage qualified early childhood teachers to work in before-school settings. The same month as that seminar, the ALP released a document, *New Directions for Early Childhood Education: Universal access to early learning for 4 year olds* (Rudd & Macklin, 2007b). The document contained further detail of proposed key reforms in early childhood, which included an “early childhood workforce strategy”. The provision of 1,500 new fully funded university places in early childhood education would support the goal of teachers working in before-school contexts, including child care.

Against this backdrop of early childhood reforms were the comments that I was hearing in my work as a teacher educator. My work in teacher education was initially concurrent with my work as Director of a child care centre based on a university campus. I was regularly invited to present guest lectures in different early childhood units of study, always with a focus on child care. When I moved from my work as a Director to commence full-time work in teacher education, I brought with me a range of professional experiences from different early childhood contexts. In class discussions, I frequently drew upon my passion and longevity in child care. Over a number of years, my work in teacher education involved the co-ordination of a core child care unit, with a focus on children aged from birth to 3 years. This unit was positioned in the third year of a four-year bachelor program, and students were required to complete a four-week block of Field Studies in a child care centre,

working with young children of this age. The work of designing and implementing this unit of study provided me with numerous insights into preservice teachers' thinking about child care and work in child care. Comments made in tutorial groups indicated that a significant number of the early childhood preservice teachers were negative about work in child care. However, it was one particular comment by one of the third-year preservice early childhood teachers that unsettled me:

Although I enjoy being with the younger children, this field experience has made me realise that when I am a *qualified* teacher, I want to *educate* school age children. (Abbey, emphasis added to indicate Abbey's intonation)

Abbey's comment, along with other comments from preservice students, and observations that colleagues had shared, led me to think about what was happening to construct this thinking—in the field, in our course of teacher education, and possibly more broadly, in the community. Given the mounting focus of the Commonwealth Government early childhood reforms, including new requirements for degree-qualified teachers to work in child care, Abbey's negativity alerted me to a point of tension and a desire to explore this in more depth.

What follows in this chapter is a brief overview of some background to my inquiry. First, the purpose for the research is provided through a broad map of the field. Attention to early childhood, professionalism and preservice teacher education, provides a brief summary of what the “experts” say about the issues. Second, the research questions that are raised through the contradictions and tensions in the map of the field are outlined. Third, the theoretical framework and research design are addressed. The works of theorists who were most useful in making sense of these tensions are explained and the methodology of this study is outlined. Fourth, ethics and limitations are discussed. Finally, this chapter gives a brief overview of the structure of the thesis.

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

1.1.1 Early childhood in Australia

Early childhood contexts in Australia include family day care, child care, kindergarten/preschool and the lower years of primary school. Early childhood *education* programs and early childhood *care* programs have historically developed separately, with services to address care, health or education (Tayler, 2011).

Kindergarten/preschool has provided early childhood programs for children in the year prior to commencing school, with a focus on play-based learning (Ailwood, 2003a). Historically, child care has been provided as a service to care for children while mothers/parents participate in paid work (Brennan, 1998; Wong, 2006). The split between preschool/education and child care/care has, in part, been attributed to the origins of these early childhood contexts, although there have been shifts to integrate education and care. Yet, purposes for kindergarten/preschool and child care “have been, and are still diverse” (Tayler, 2011, p. 215). Like elsewhere in the world (for example, United Kingdom, United States, Belgium, Norway and Finland; OECD, 2006, p. 48), Australia has attempted to bring education and care together through models of integrated early childhood centres (Tayler, 2011).

Participation in child care in Australia has increased significantly over the past two decades (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 2011b). One reason for this increase has been attributed to changing patterns of women’s engagement in paid work after motherhood (ABS, 2011a). The increase in workforce participation, resulting in an increased demand for child care, has seen the number of child care centres grow considerably. The expansion in the number of child care centres, alongside the changes to government policy in early childhood, has seen issues pertaining to workforce as central to reform in early childhood (Council of Australian Governments [COAG], 2008; Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations [DEEWR], 2009c; Rudd & Macklin, 2007a, 2007b).

In Australia, the early childhood workforce is diverse, with a range of qualification requirements called for to work in different positions (Watson, 2006b). Child care studies are embedded in university-based early childhood teacher education courses, Technical and Further Education (TAFE) based vocational education and training (VET) courses and registered training organisations (RTO). University-based early childhood teacher education programs prepare preservice teachers to work across a range of early childhood contexts with children aged 0 to 8 years, including child care (Watson & Axford, 2008). Some universities also offer teacher education programs with a focus on children aged 0 to 5 years, which precludes work in primary school. Other universities offer programs for teachers of children aged 0 to 12 years, which extends into upper primary. Teacher registration is

administered under state/territory jurisdictions and requires a four-year teaching qualification.

A four-year early childhood degree offered at the university where I teach qualifies graduates to work with children aged 0 to 8 years, and includes career options in a range of early childhood contexts. However, surveys of graduates of this degree, taken over the past five years, indicate that many students desire career options in contexts other than child care. In the year after completing their degree, the majority (over 60%) of employed graduates were teaching in primary schools (QUT, 2011). Approximately 5% had attained work in kindergartens (the year prior to formal school), and approximately 13% were working in child care, predominantly employed as a group leader (a position requiring only a two-year diploma qualification, not a degree). This pattern of career options for early childhood graduates does not appear to be isolated, with other Australian preservice teachers indicating this preference for employment in a primary school setting. Recent studies indicate that this preference is shared by preservice early childhood teacher education students who are reluctant to work in child care (Thorpe, Boyd, Ailwood, & Brownlee, 2011; Vajda, 2005a), and have negativity toward child care per se (Ailwood & Boyd, 2006). Other research has shown that preservice teachers who enter teaching degrees with a two-year diploma view their university qualification as a “pathway *out of* childcare” (Watson, 2006b, p. xv, original emphasis).

The historical differences between early childhood education and early childhood care continue. Despite efforts toward integration, preschool and child care are produced separately. Additionally, the growth in women’s participation in the paid workforce has increased demand for the care of children through child care. The early childhood workforce comprises a range of staff qualification requirements, attained through universities, TAFEs or RTOs. Early childhood degree-qualified teachers have a range of career pathways available, including work in child care contexts. However, emerging studies and graduate data from my university appears to indicate that child care as a career option for early childhood teachers appears to be resisted. Additionally, my observations of the career aspirations of preservice teachers that I teach indicate a preference towards primary school teaching. These points are expanded upon in Chapter 2 of the thesis.

1.1.2 Early childhood policy

In 2007, as part of an election campaign, the ALP in Australia (then in opposition) coined the phrase “education revolution” (ALP, 2007). Reform in early childhood was included in the proposed changes to education. In a blueprint for future early childhood developments, *New Directions for Early Childhood Education: Universal access to early learning for 4 year olds* (Rudd & Macklin, 2007b), a call for increased investment in early childhood was made. A number of initiatives were proposed, including “all four year olds entitled to receive 15 hours of learning per week” (p. 16) with delivery by a “four year qualified teacher” (p. 16). Also proposed was a national early childhood curriculum to replace the previous curricula developed by each state and territory. In addition, these proposed reforms would necessitate transference of responsibility for early childhood education and care policy and infrastructure to the Commonwealth level (p. 1).

After a landslide election win (Walsh, 2007), the ALP’s reforms were actioned and a raft of policy documents were rolled out that reshaped early childhood in Australia. The core goal central to these reforms was access for all children living in Australia to a “quality early childhood education” (DEEWR, 2009b, p. 1) for 15 hours a week in the year prior to commencing formal schooling. A key component of this “quality early childhood education” was that it be “delivered by a university trained early childhood teacher” (DEEWR, 2009b, p. 1). This represented a significant shift in staffing requirements for before-school contexts, most notably in child care.

With the universal access initiative came the necessity to reconfigure the profile of staff in early childhood by including increased numbers of four-year degree-qualified teachers across states and territories in Australia. An exception was in New South Wales (NSW), where, for some time, degree-qualified early childhood teachers had been required in centres with an enrolment of over 30 children (New South Wales [NSW] Government, 2004). The Australian Government recognised that providing universal access would require measures that would “improve recruitment and retention of the early childhood education and child care workforce; develop pathways that reward and support the best workers; and raise the level of qualifications” (DEEWR, 2009b, p. 1).

The proposed “universal access” strategy (DEEWR, 2009b, 2009c; Rudd & Macklin, 2007b) required four-year qualified early childhood teachers who were prepared to work in child care contexts. Ironically, cohorts of preservice teachers resist child care as a career option, and this is apparent through not only anecdotal observations, but also data from emerging studies (see Ailwood & Boyd, 2006; Thorpe et al., 2011; Vадja, 2005a, 2005b). Government policies call for staff in child care to have formal teaching qualifications, and those who are graduating with these formal teaching qualifications do not desire to work in child care contexts. It is this point of contradiction that has prompted further inquiry into child care and work in child care, and forms the basis for this thesis.

A simple cause-and-effect reasoning for why graduates are reluctant to work in child care seems inadequate and has so far failed to explain this mismatch between policy intent and outcomes for the field. Policy documents and political speak seem to underline the importance of a “professional” educator. The notion of professionalism figured regularly in preservice teachers’ talk as they elaborated on Abbey’s expressed desire on becoming a “qualified teacher”. Professionalism appears to be harnessed to quality and is used to indicate the assurance of quality. This is seemingly true of a tennis coach whose shirt is emblazoned with “tennis professional”; the hairdresser claiming that “beautiful hair needs an expert”; and the beautician who is now an “eyebrow specialist and skin professional”. Professionalism is their selling point and they suggest that this is the added factor that guarantees quality.

This study seeks to problematise the construction of early childhood teachers’ professional identities. As emerging studies show, there are a number of ways to seek answers about why early childhood teachers may not desire child care as a career path, and this study will make a valuable contribution to furthering understandings of a complex and complicated point of contention. This study seeks to raise new questions about teacher career choices and to consider how these choices might shape and be shaped by the discursive construction of professional identities. Consideration of the discursive formation of early childhood teachers’ professional identities will go some way to understanding what is *sayable* and *unsayable* when it comes to ways of *being* and *performing* an early childhood teacher.

The dynamics of the early childhood field are an important factor in early childhood teacher identities. In the relatively short time in which this research was conducted, a number of legislative and industrial changes occurred in the early childhood landscape in Australia. This thesis points to these changes as relevant to the story that it tells about early childhood teacher professional identities; it does not, however, claim to capture the details of each of these changes. Sufficient to this thesis is the understanding of the fluidity and volatility that has characterised the field of early childhood historically, and continues today.

In this shifting and complex landscape, the requirement for university-trained early childhood teachers to work in child care presented a nodal point worthy of exploration and investigation. In order to scrutinise some of the ironies, contradictions and contestations about professional identities, it was important to make considered decisions about the design of the study. It was necessary to establish what would constitute useful data for examination and how this data would best be analysed to provide new insights into the preservice teachers' desires and aspirations. One key document that captured the intent of the imminent government changes was selected for close reading. At the same time, focus group conversations were conducted with a number of preservice teachers who were nearing their graduation at the time these reforms would be introduced.

The purpose of this study was to investigate some of the discursive practices that shape early childhood teacher identities, and the employment aspirations and choices of graduating qualified, professional early childhood teachers. This research has potential to lead to important understandings of some of the discourses available to early childhood teachers when they are considering their career options. The understandings that emerge from this study are one reading of ways that teacher educators might work differently, and early childhood teachers might consider other possibilities. It is anticipated that this reading will provide a platform for considering the future of early childhood education in Australia at the levels of policy, pedagogy and university training.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The key research question for this study:

- How are early childhood teachers' professional identities currently produced?

To conduct such an inquiry, it was necessary to develop a number of sub-questions. These sub-questions work as organisers for the thesis chapters:

- a) What are the current understandings about the “expert” (Fraser, 1989) talk of early childhood teachers' professional identities? (Chapter 2)
- b) What theoretical understandings would enable new ways of thinking about early childhood teachers' professional identities? (Chapter 3)
- c) How could such an inquiry into early childhood teachers' professional identities be designed and what sites would be worthwhile sites for investigation? (Chapter 4)
- d) What new understandings emerge from new readings of the discursive construction of early childhood teachers' professional identities? (Chapters 6 to 8)

1.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH DESIGN

The study was designed as an investigation into the discursive construction of early childhood teachers' professional identities. In order to conduct such a study, early childhood teacher identities were problematised, enabling possibilities for different understandings of current shapings of these identities. A poststructuralist orientation was employed that drew upon Foucauldian theory (1980a, 1981, 1982, 1984a, 1984b, 1990a, 1990b) to map possible readings of early childhood teacher identities. Poststructuralist understandings of identities take into account the evolving, non-linear and contradictory dimensions of identity, and how identities are shaped and reshaped by language (Weedon, 1997, 1999). Poststructuralist thinking about identities enables possibilities to look to different and multiple ways in which to view the construction of identity and, in so doing, begin and begin again (Foucault, 1984b, 1990b). MacNaughton (2004a) suggests that to begin and begin again encourages a disruption of “patterns of knowledge and practice that oppress, marginalise and reduce our capacity for respecting ourselves and others” (p. 1).

Foucault's work on discourse, power/knowledge, regimes of truth and resistance was drawn on to inform the study. In particular, Foucault's (1972/1989) notion of discourse as "the general domain of all statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a number of statements" (p. 80) was central to the inquiry that looked at the discursive formation of identities. Discourses entail certain "conditions that enable people, according to the rules of true and false statements", to be produced, or constituted as a "subject" (Florence, 1994, p. 462). As regulated statements, discourses come together in ways that are predictable, and they have their own depth, substance and consistency. Identity work on gender, performativity and investment was also drawn on to consider the constitution of early childhood teachers' professional identities (Davies, 2004/2006; McNay, 1992; Osgood, 2012; Walkerdine, 1990; Weedon, 1997). Identities in this study are considered to be contingent, complex and produced through discourses. The ways in which discourses intersect, compete and collide produce the subject (Foucault, 1981) and, in the case of this inquiry, produce the early childhood teacher.

The theories that form the basis for this study are concerned with discourse, power/knowledge, regimes of truth and resistance, along with theories on the constitution of identities. These theories are expanded on in Chapter 3 of the thesis.

The use of theories calls for the application of particular methodologies, and that will elicit the understandings that this inquiry seeks. Discourse analysis was used as the methodological framework, drawing on Foucauldian concepts of discourse. Discourse analysis as a method is not prescriptive, nonetheless, it provides a valuable tool for considering discursive practice and how, through power, people are affected (Foucault, 1980a). Discourse analysis was an appropriate fit with the focus for this study on the production and maintenance of early childhood teacher identities. To treat discourse as a social practice suggests the importance of understanding the practices of subjectivity (Holstein & Gubrium, 2005). Subjects and objects are produced through discourse, with the subject active in shaping and enacting the discourse.

Data was generated through a political document and focus group discussions. The first data set, the document, was a key early childhood political document that read as a "moment of arising" (Foucault, 1984a, p. 83). The document was selected for its current influence on the early childhood field, and in particular, workforce

reforms that call for four-year degree-qualified teachers to work in before-school contexts, including child care. The second data set was four focus group discussions conducted with preservice early childhood teachers. The document and transcripts of the focus groups were the basis of *text*, in the Foucauldian sense of text (Foucault, 1981). The data was analysed through the process of organising and classifying pieces of information and systematically identifying their key features or relationships and then interpreting them (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004).

The treatment used with both data sets involved *redescription*. In addition to Foucault's work and theories on identity outlined above, a particular approach of redescription was employed. For the policy document, a technique for reading *document-as-text* applied a genealogical approach (Foucault, 1984a). Genealogy records the "history of the present", and interpretations "appear as events on the stage of historical process" (Foucault, 1984a, p. 86). Meredyth and Tyler (1993) explain genealogical work as different "from other approaches to history through its interest in making strange the present, rather than the past" (p. 4). Genealogy is particularly relevant in considering early childhood teachers' professional identities and provided a useful framework for conducting this research. A strong tenet of genealogy is to identify discursive practice as a "regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is the type of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true" (Foucault, 1980a, p. 131). Genealogy looks to "inquire into processes, procedures, and techniques through which truth, knowledge and beliefs are produced" (Meadmore, Hatcher, & McWilliam, 2000, p. 463). This method for conducting an inquiry authenticates how discourses are situated historically and how they evolve and evolve again over time.

For the focus groups, the process of redescription (Rorty, 1989) involved reading *talk-as-text*. As a method, redescription involves describing "lots and lots of things in new ways until you have created a pattern of linguistic behaviour which will tempt the new generation to adopt it" (Rorty, 1989, p. 9). The identification of key features in the data was shaped by the theoretical lens outlined above and linked to the research question. The development and application of categories (Davies, 2004/2006) built on a poststructuralist theoretical framework and the literature review informed the data analysis method of discourse analysis. Irony provided a rhetorical and playful tool (Haraway, 1991; Rorty, 1989), to look to how seemingly

opposing discourses are held together. Irony resists a truth and considers “the contingency and fragility of their final vocabularies” (Rorty, 1989, p. 73). This resistance to words as being a truth opens a space to bring together binaries and think about them in a way in which both are possible and both are true. Irony resists the choice of one or the other being right, and holds opposites together in tension.

The research method involved the generation of data and analysis using genealogy and redescription, expanded on in Chapter 4. Both sources of data, the document (see Chapter 5) and the focus group discussions (see Chapters 6 and 7), were used to form a final reading (see Chapter 8) that encompassed both bodies of data in order to address the research questions.

1.4 KEY TERMS

1.4.1 Early childhood

This study uses the term *early childhood* to refer to programs and contexts for children aged between 0 and 8 years. Early childhood is the period of life from birth to 8 years of age (Berk, 2009). It can also refer to the range of early childhood contexts, including play groups, family day care, child care, kindergarten/preschool and the lower years of primary school. The choice of the term early childhood is deliberate in this thesis and makes a departure from *early childhood education and care*, which is widely, though not consistently, used in policy, curriculum and practice. Although some documents use the term ECEC (see, for example, COAG, 2008; DEEWR, 2012; OECD, 2006), others use *early childhood education* (Family and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs [FACSIA], 2007) or a combination of the above. The choice to use early childhood in this thesis resists an alignment to early childhood education or early childhood care. This point is afforded further attention in the literature review and data analysis chapters (see Chapters 2, 5 and 7).

1.4.2 Early childhood teacher

An early childhood teacher is defined in this study as a degree-qualified educator. The document *New Directions* (Rudd & Macklin, 2007b) specifies a four-year degree as the qualification required to provide the “universal access” for four-year-old children. In Australia both three- and four-year degree qualifications are offered (Watson & Axford, 2008), and in this study, the term early childhood teacher is inclusive of both qualifications.

1.4.3 Child care

The term *child care* is used in this study to refer to centre-based care for children in the years prior to school entry, 0 to approximately 5 years. Child care centres operate for up to 52 weeks of the year (DEEWR, 2012), and are open for “on average 11 hours a day” (OECD, 2006, p. 266). Centres usually operate Monday – Friday. Child care centres may be not-for-profit/community-based or for-profit/private (Brennan, 2007).

1.5 ETHICS AND RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

Poststructuralist orientation to research resists a claim that research is neutral (Lather, 2000). I do not come to this research as naive, though through the systems of checks and balances that have been put in place, and also because of the theoretical framework, it is possible for my interests to be brought to bear.

The 18 participants for the four focus groups were drawn from a university child care field studies unit for which I was the co-ordinator. Participation was voluntary and the information provided to prospective participants stated that the research would in no way affect their current or future relationship with the university, particularly in regard to grades. An external moderator conducted the focus groups, due in part to my pre-existing relationship with the preservice teachers from previous semesters, together with the goal of eliciting responses that were not inhibited (Morrison-Beedy, Cote-Arsenault, & Feinstein, 2001; Silverman, 2009).

Although the number of participants in the focus groups was small, the theoretical and methodological approach allows for close examination of the talk. This study does not make broad generalisations from the analysis, but locates and maps the available discourses and how they intersect. The aim was to explore what was sayable and unsayable about early childhood teacher professional identities, and how “regime[s] of truth” (Foucault, 1984a, p. 109) enabled ways of speaking.

1.6 ORGANISATION OF THESIS

This introductory chapter has presented an overview of the study. The research aim and key questions for the study have been identified. The theoretical framework and the methodological approach have been briefly outlined. Chapter 2 reviews the literature, providing a map of the early childhood studies with a focus on some of the

dominant discourses that currently shape the field and the identities of early childhood teachers. Chapter 3 expands on the theoretical framework that informs the study, making links between various theories and their relevance for this study. Chapter 4 includes the methodology and provides an overview of the research design and the collection, management and analysis of the data. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 constitute the three data chapters. The first of these, Chapter 5, examines the first data set, the *document-as-text*, called *New Directions*. The following two chapters, Chapters 6 and 7, look to the *talk-as-text* generated through the focus groups with preservice early childhood teachers. In each of these three data chapters, the discourses that were accessible and worked to constitute early childhood teacher professional identities are mapped. The final chapter, Chapter 8, is the conclusion, which draws the three data chapters together. In this chapter, the research questions are reconsidered. This final chapter concludes with recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter 2 presents a review of literature that provides anchor points for this study into the production of early childhood teachers' professional identities. This chapter addresses the first research sub-question: What are the current understandings about the “expert” (Fraser, 1989) talk of early childhood teachers' professional identities? (see Chapter 1, Section 1.2).

In order to conduct this inquiry, it was useful to map the terrain and understand some of the expert discourses that shape early childhood teachers' professional identities. The literature review is arranged around four nodal points. First, early childhood is considered. Given the research focus on early childhood, it was necessary to map the shifts, reversals and discourses that have emerged in this field. Early childhood is afforded the most attention due in part to its centrality to this inquiry and to the complexity and diversity in the field. Next, the nodal point of professionalism is considered. A genealogical approach is undertaken to trace the emergence of some of the discourses that have shaped professionalism. Third, literature on teacher education is examined. Given that one of the sites for data collection was preservice teachers in the third year of a degree, consideration is given to the nature of teacher education. Finally, a brief examination of identities provides insights into how identities are considered in this thesis: as emergent at different points in time and shaped by discursive practices. Identities and identities theories are further explored in Chapter 3, providing a theoretical framework for the study.

The four nodal points in this study—early childhood, professionalism, preservice teacher education and identities—are considered to be interconnected, with each being an important key to the research question about the production of early childhood teachers' professional identities. Figure 2.1 illustrates the process of moving through the four nodal points in the literature review towards the main research focus. The process began broadly with early childhood literature, then followed with increasingly focused research on the other three nodal points: professionalism, preservice teacher education and identities.

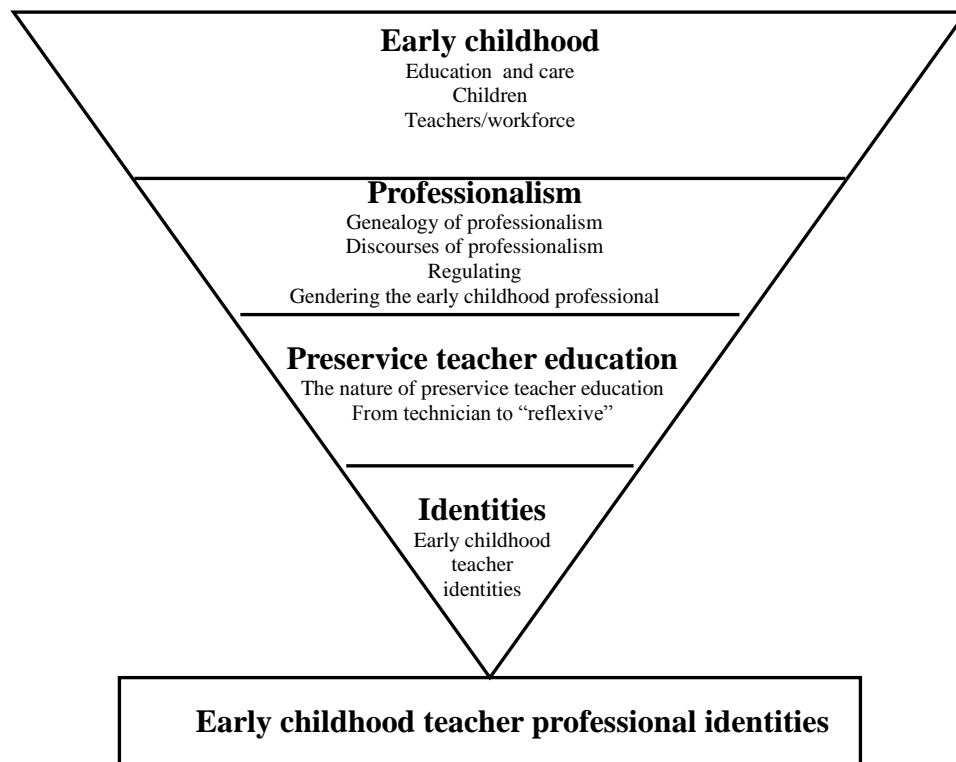


Figure 2.1. Four nodal points in literature.

2.1 EARLY CHILDHOOD

The first and most substantial section of the literature review focuses on early childhood. This section is structured in three parts. The first part examines some of the historical orientations that have shaped early childhood. Particular attention is given to education and care. Different early childhood contexts are considered, and in line with this research focus, child care is examined. Next, the emergence of key discourses that shape constructions of children and childhood are considered. In the final part of this section, issues related to the early childhood workforce are explored. Attention is also afforded to qualifications and staff retention.

For some time, those in the early childhood field have grappled with the competing discourses of care, and education and care. More recently, argument has been made for the integration of education and care (see, for example, OECD, 2001, 2006), and the phrase early childhood education and care has emerged. The complexities in this term were noted in Chapter 1. The following section expands on this complexity and examines education and care.

2.1.1 Education and care

In early childhood, a number of terms are used to describe the field. *Early years*, *early childhood*, *early childhood education*, and *early childhood education and care* are among the terms that appear in policy, curriculum, texts, position titles and so on. In the United States, the phrase early childhood education (ECE) is frequently used, partly as an attempt to capture the idea that education and learning take place across all contexts (White, 2002), and is not isolated to preschool. The OECD's *Starting Strong* (2001, 2006, 2012) suite of publications use the phrase early childhood education and care. *Starting Strong II* makes the point that "services for young children should combine care, developmental and learning opportunities, and that education and care should not exist apart in approaches to young children" (OECD, 2006, p. 229). The addition of care to early childhood signalled bringing together preschool education and child care. However, the split between care and education seems ongoing with "longstanding division between child care and early education still operates in most of the English-speaking world" (OECD, 2006, p. 230).

The delineations between education and care can be attributed, in part, to the complexity in the purposes of early childhood. According to the OECD, it is:

...concerned with providing education and care to young children but it is also linked with women's employment and equality of opportunity; child development and child poverty issues; labour market supply; children's health, social welfare and early education. (OECD, 2006, p. 47)

Early childhood contexts have historically reflected differences in their purpose (Osgood, 2012; Press, 2009; Wong, 2007). Two early childhood contexts are outlined here: preschool and child care. The age group for preschool programs is conceptualised as children aged 3 to 6 years (OECD, 2006). An origin of kindergarten/preschool programs is a focus on learning and play (Ailwood, 2003a; Froebel, 1895). Additionally, a focus within preschool has been on early intervention and targeting children who are socially disadvantaged (Tayler, Wills, Hayden, & Wilson, 2006). By contrast, in child care, the purposes have been to "ameliorate poverty and disadvantage" (Tayler, 2011, p. 215) and increase rates of parental (particularly mothers') workforce participation (Brennan, 1998; Wong, 2007). The number of child care places increased during World War II, with women taking on a

more prominent profile in the labour market (Wong, 2007). Both education and care contexts have also had origins in philanthropy, where women cared for other women's children (Osgood, 2012; Wong, 2007). The delineation of preschool/kindergarten as *education* and child care as *care* has thus been constructed through historical origins of these early childhood contexts.

This orientation is not to suggest that conceptions of preschool and child care have been as simple as preschool/education and child care / care. There has been commentary offered in which education and care exist alongside each other, whether in child care, preschool or school contexts (Noddings, 1992). Yet, the distinction between education and care has been reinforced, to an extent, through government organisation of early childhood (OECD, 2006).

Early childhood in Australia has been marked by the divisions between education and care (Brennan, 1998; Press, 2009; Wong, 2007). The current early childhood system in Australia includes different levels of legislation, policy and funding across federal, state and, in some cases, local government. Adding to this policy landscape are multi-layered, overlapping three- to four-year cycles between elections, with changes of government and political parties leading to changes in the values shaping policy. Australia has two major political parties, the Liberal Party and the ALP. The Liberal Party purports to value: "rights and freedoms of all people" and "maximises individual and private sector initiative" (Liberal Party, 2012). The ALP is a "social democratic party" that values "giving every Australian opportunities through education and training, ensuring fairness at work and supporting Australians throughout the different stages and transitions of their lives" (ALP, 2012). At a broad level, these political values underpin policy development, including early childhood policy development.

To add to the complexity in early childhood, policy provision is auspiced by both federal and state education departments (kindergarten/preschool) and departments concerned with community, family and human services (child care) (Brennan, 2007; Press, 2009; Watson, 2006b). In recent years, there have been policy changes to bring together care and education (Brennan, 1998; Press, 2009). At the federal government level, ministerial portfolios responsible for early childhood have been reconfigured. Examples include Minister Kate Ellis's dual portfolios of Minister for Workforce Participation and Minister for Early Education and Child

Care. It is not unusual for Australian government ministerial structures to be reconfigured and bundled together with politically relevant connected portfolios. One example is the arrangement of *employment participation* and *early childhood education and child care*, notable given the historical origins of child care as a policy intervention to increase women's workforce participation (Press, 2009). Another example is Peter Garrett's portfolio. He is Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth. The back and forth between early childhood, early childhood education, and early childhood development is, on one level, semantics. Another reading is that this choice of words or title reflects the complexity in the education/care issue that governments and those working in the field grapple with (Watson, 2006b).

One way to disrupt divisions between education and care is through understanding constructions of childhood that underpin policy development (Mitchell, 2010). The values and beliefs about children that shape policy go some way to explaining an orientation towards education and/or care. For example, children constructed as "participants in society and autonomous beings" (Mitchell, 2010, p. 330) challenges the notion of early childhood policy being about "a service to support parental employment ... and as a service to rescue disadvantaged children" (p. 330). This approach provides a useful orientation for developing policy that brings together education and care.

The separation of education and care is described in the document *Starting Strong II* as perpetuating "two tiered education childhood systems" (OECD, 2006, p. 65). The split between child care and early education results in a "lack of coherence for children and families", which involves "confusing variation in objectives, funding streams, operational procedures, regulatory frameworks, staff-training and qualifications" (p. 65). In attempts to re-envisage this education-care divide, *Starting Strong II* turns to examples from countries that have integrated education and care. One international example comes from Germany, where, in the tradition of "social pedagogy", education and care are not separated (OECD, 2004). This presents an understanding of early childhood in which the focus is on social learning skills and viewing the child care centre as a community resource.

A focus on integration of education and care has also been taken up in Australia, with its goal for "high quality and integrated early childhood education

and care services” (COAG, 2006, p. 1). Universal access is desirable, in addition to putting forward integration of care and education as a way to address the complexity in early childhood: “in Europe, the concept of universal access for 3- to 6-year-olds is generally accepted” (OECD, 2006, p. 77). There has been focus on “universal access” both internationally and within Australia (COAG, 2009a; OECD, 2006, p. 14). Under provisions of universal access, early childhood programs are made available to all children, and thus, it becomes a right that children have access to early childhood programs (Rudd & Macklin, 2007b). Child care has been a particular focus of universal access, and attention is now turned to this early childhood context.

Child care

ABS data shows patterns in child care usage increasing, with a marked increase in children aged 0 to 4 years. In 1996, 13% of children aged 0 to 4 accessed child care or long day care in any one week (ABS, 2011b). In 2011, 31% of children in this same age group were in child care. Thus, child care usage has increased substantially over the past decade, and is predicted to continue to increase (Doiron & Kalb, 2005). This construction of child care use appears to be driven, at least partially, by the notion that “younger children are considered to need ‘childcare’ rather than early education” (OECD, 2006, p. 46). Thus, a primary reason for children under 3 years accessing child care is for care.

A reason, though not the sole one, for the existence of child care, has been to provide care for children so that mothers are able to participate in paid work (Brennan, 1998). The “wish to increase women’s labour market participation” (OECD, 2006, p. 12), together with the increase in women returning to work after motherhood, has presented a need for an increase and expansion of child care in Australia (Pocock, 2006; Pocock, Skinner, & Williams, 2012). Feminist discourses have constructed child care as freeing of women from the “‘debilitating’ issue of motherhood” (Osgood, 2012, p. 14). Therefore, child care has provided care for children, so that mothers are able to engage in other tasks.

There have been other reasons noted for child care use, such as the benefits for children, society and government (OECD, 2006). In addition to the focus on addressing poverty and disadvantage (Tayler, 2011; Wong, 2007), the benefits for children’s wellbeing (Moore & Oberklaid, 2010) and social development have been particularly highlighted, especially for children aged over 3 years (Berk, 2009).

Children's participation in child care has also been cautioned against. Populist books have emerged to challenge child care use (Biddulph, 2006; Biddulph, 2008; Manne, 2005), in some cases distinguishing usage for boys and girls, particularly for children who are under three (Biddulph, 2006). This criticism has drawn on attachment theory (Ainsworth, Blehar, & Waters, 1978) that purports the importance of a secure attachment between a child and a significant trusted adult, with the assumption that this is the mother (Manne, 2005). *Starting Strong II* also draws on attachment theory to make a case to support parental leave, inclusive of mothers and fathers: "Research shows that one-to-one care of babies during the first year of life develops their sense of attachment, and contributes to their emotional and language development" (Tanaka, 2005, cited in OECD, 2006, p. 23).

There has been caution against children being placed in child care because it could be detrimental to children's development (Belsky, 1990; Berk, 2009). Participation in child care has also been attributed to children's increased stress levels. The measure of the hormone cortisol has been used to determine stress levels in children who were in child care (Sims, Guilfoyle, & Parry, 2006). The quality of child care was found to be key in children's stress levels, and concomitantly, quality was linked to the appropriateness of child care (Sims, 2003; Watamura, Kryzer, & Robertson, 2009). A central determinant of quality, and thus, children's stress levels, was the "responsiveness and sensitivity of caregivers" (Watamura et al., 2009, p. 476). This research highlights the importance of quality child care, with a focus on staff-child relationships.

Independent of these arguments on the benefits and detriments of child care participation, the number of child care centres has grown, commensurate with levels of parental workforce participation (ABS, 2011a, 2011b). Included in this growth has been the emergence of different models of child care of operation. Different business models of child care provision have seen three distinct types: not-for-profit/community-based; for-profit/private and corporate child care (Brennan, 1998; Press, 2009; Sumsion, 2006). A model of not-for-profit/community-based child care has been prominent in early childhood programs internationally (OECD, 2006; Penn, 2011b). Not-for-profit/community-based centres are purportedly driven by principles of working with families and are committed to the highest quality (Doherty, Friendly, & Olomon, 1998). The link between quality and not-for-profit principles

has seen the not-for-profit/community-based business model touted as the most appropriate for children and for families (Penn, 2011b). For-profit/private child care centres operate under two related business models: privately owned and operated child care, and corporate child care (Brennan, 1998). Private/for-profit centres are owned by individuals or small businesses and operate independently. The corporate child care model includes a larger operation in which a number of centres are centrally managed by a company.

In Australia during the 1980s, nearly all centres were based on the not-for-profit model (Sumsion, 2006). From the mid-1990s, the corporate child care model gained an increased stronghold in the marketplace (Wannan, 2005). Around this time, government policies were responding to a need for more child care places, which came from increased parental workforce participation rates. A key change was the 1996 abolition of government operational funding to not-for-profit/community-based centres. The model moved from supply side funding, which meant funds were paid to the centre, to demand side funding, which meant funding was put into subsidising parents' child care fees (Press, 2009). This rearrangement of child care funding established a level playing field, in which all child care centres, regardless of their business model of operation, had access to the same levels of funding. At the time of this policy shift, Australia was governed by the Liberal Party. A key value of the Liberal Party is to provide for "private sector initiative" (Liberal Party, 2012). A significant increase in the number of privately owned and corporate child care centres resulted (Sumsion, 2006; Wannan, 2005).

Prior to its collapse in 2008, ABC Learning Centres was the largest provider of child care in the world (ABC Learning Centres Limited, 2005, 2006). This corporate child care provider controlled close to 25% of child care places in Australia (Wannan, 2005). In May 2010, during a media interview to mark the corporate-rescue of ABC child care by a not-for-profit child care consortium, Goodstart, the Minister for Early Childhood Education and Child Care noted:

We know that in order to have a stable child care market in this nation we need the right balance of not-for-profit and private providers and as a result of Goodstart today taking over 570 formerly ABC centres, the mix of not-for-profit providers in the market increases from 22 to 34 percent. (Ministers' Media Centre, 2010a)

In describing the collapse of ABC Learning and the subsequent emergence of Goodstart, Ms Gillard, as Australian Deputy Prime Minister, commented, “it’s profoundly changed our child care sector and our child care market” (Ministers’ Media Centre, 2010a). A child care marketplace with a stronger representation of not-for-profit businesses was an outcome, though the majority of child care centres are privately owned and operated.

In Australia, the provision of for-profit and not-for-profit child care is the result, to an extent, of child care policy—who can provide it, how it is funded, and how it should operate (Penn, 2011a). A brief examination of the nature of policy in early childhood and other related initiatives is relevant for this inquiry into early childhood teachers’ professional identities.

Policy shifts

The complexity in early childhood policy is a consistent theme in the literature (Bennett, 2005; Bown, Sumsion, & Press, 2009; Brennan, 2007; Moss & Petrie, 2002; Oberhuemer, 2005; Penn, 2011a; Press, 2009; Tayler, 2011). This complexity is partially attributed to the points that have already been outlined in this chapter: the origins of child care and kindergarten/preschool; the range of purposes for early childhood; and different government arrangements for policy for the field. The various levels of government have different responsibilities for funding, curriculum and regulatory frameworks (Press, 2006; Tayler, 2011). Additionally, and as previously outlined in this chapter, early childhood programs are differently auspiced depending on whether they are in before-school contexts (including kindergarten/preschool and child care) or in schools (lower years of primary school).

Early childhood became a policy focus in the Rudd government “education revolution” during period 2007 to 2009 (ALP, 2007). As a key platform of the 2007 ALP federal election campaign, the education revolution claimed to herald a “new phase in national approaches to education policy” (Reid, 2009, p. 3). A document that emerged in the early childhood policy landscape was *New Directions for Early Childhood Education: Universal access to early learning for 4 year olds* (Rudd & Macklin, 2007b). This document is part of the data for this inquiry into professional identities of early childhood teachers. A full explanation for its selection is outlined in Chapter 4 (see Section 4.6.1) and Chapter 5 (see Section 5.1).

In 2009, with the early years prominent in the policy landscape in Australia, Kate Ellis, the inaugural Minister for Early Childhood Education, Child Care and Youth declared: “This Government is seizing this opportunity and has placed early childhood firmly on the national agenda” (Ellis, 2009). In particular, the document *Investing in the Early Years: National Early Childhood Development Strategy* (COAG, 2009b) mapped out a blueprint for future early childhood developments. A core component of this is a universal access initiative. The goal of this initiative is for all children living in Australia to have access to a “quality early childhood education program” for 15 hours a week in the year prior to commencing formal schooling, which will be “delivered by a university trained early childhood teacher” (DEEWR, 2009b, p. 1). These programs would be offered across a range of before-school settings, including kindergartens and child care. Related to this universal access initiative is a plan to reconceptualise the profile of staff in early childhood. Specifically, there was an aim to “improve recruitment and retention of the early childhood education and child care workforce; develop pathways that reward and support the best workers; and raise the level of qualifications” (DEEWR, 2009b, p. 1).

As part of the policy reform in Australia, the *National Quality Standards* were established in Australia in 2009 and came into effect from January 2012 (DEEWR, 2012). The *National Quality Framework* (NQF) was established under an applied law system, comprising the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. The NQF applied to long day care (child care), family day care, outside school hours care and preschools (known as kindergarten in some jurisdictions) in Australia from January 1, 2012. The NQF and associated regulatory system is enacted through the legislation that established a national system for early childhood. The Education and Care Services National Regulations support the legislation and provide detail on a range of operational requirements for education and care services (Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority [ACECQA], 2012). Included in these standards is a national approach to regulations around staffing qualifications. A fuller discussion of staff qualification is included in this chapter (see Section 2.1.3).

Two key influences in early childhood have been located in the literature: investment in early childhood, and neuroscience research. These two influences, which have also been drawn on to guide policy, are explained below.

Investing in early childhood

Central to policy reform in early childhood has been calls to increase levels of investment (Cleveland & Krashinsky, 1998, 2003; Cunha & Heckman, 2010; Cunha, Heckman, Lochner, & Masterov, 2005; Heckman, 2004). Nobel Laureate James Heckman's work, *Investing in the Early Years* (Cunha & Heckman, 2010), argues for why governments will benefit if they invest in early childhood. A case is made for early investment with a "rate of return to a dollar of investment made while a person is young is higher than the rate of return for the same dollar made at a later age" (Cunha et al., 2005, p. 19). Argument for investing in the youngest children has been made because "marginal returns are highest for the young" (Heckman, 2000, p. 39). There are benefits of investing in early childhood programs for children, families, society and government (Cleveland & Krashinsky, 1998, 2003; Cunha & Heckman, 2010; Cunha et al., 2005; Dodge, 2003; Heckman, 2004).

The broader benefits of investing in early childhood, beyond labour force participation, are mapped out in *Starting Strong II* drawing on an argument of "public good":

Early education and care contributes to the public good, *e.g.* to the general health of a nation's children, to future educational achievement, to labour market volume and flexibility, and to social cohesion. (OECD, 2006, p. 37)

Early childhood education and care as a public good are outlined by Cleveland and Krashinsky (2003, cited in OECD, 2006, p. 36). These Canadian economists suggest that the arguments in favour of treating early childhood as a public good are similar to those used in favour of public education (p. 36).

There are multiple aspects to investing in early childhood, including universal access, which means that every child has the option to attend early childhood programs. Early intervention has also received policy attention and has been noted as a key benefit of investment in early childhood. One example of a systematic investment in early childhood comes from the United States: in the High/Scope Perry

Preschool Project, African-American children aged 3 and 4 years participated in a program with a focus on cognitive development (Schweinhart et al., 2005).

Another benefit of investing in early childhood is for children to provide for a future productive workforce. A report titled *The Competition that Really Matters: Comparing U.S., Chinese, and Indian Investments in the Next-Generation Workforce* compared investment in human capital in three countries: the United States, India and China (Cooper, Hersh, & O’Leary, 2012). The report argued that “the overwhelming economic evidence points to education—and human capital investments, generally—as the key drivers of economic competitiveness in the long term” (p. 2). The investment in early childhood was thus positioned as being about the future economic benefits, not only to individuals, but also to whole nations.

Early childhood policy reform has been heavily influenced by the work of economists (OECD, 2006; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2006). However, economists have championed that “... more should be done to convince politicians of the value of investment in ECD [early childhood development]” (Dodge, 2003 p. 8). In Australia, the call to invest in early childhood is being taken up, with the federal government claiming that funding has “more than doubled in the last five years, increasing from \$1.7 billion in 2004–05 to \$3.7 billion in 2008–09 and is expected to further increase to \$4.4 billion in 2012–13” (Ministers’ Media Centre, 2010b). The injections of funds have been made in response to the work of economists, and greater awareness of neuroscience has also focused attention on early childhood.

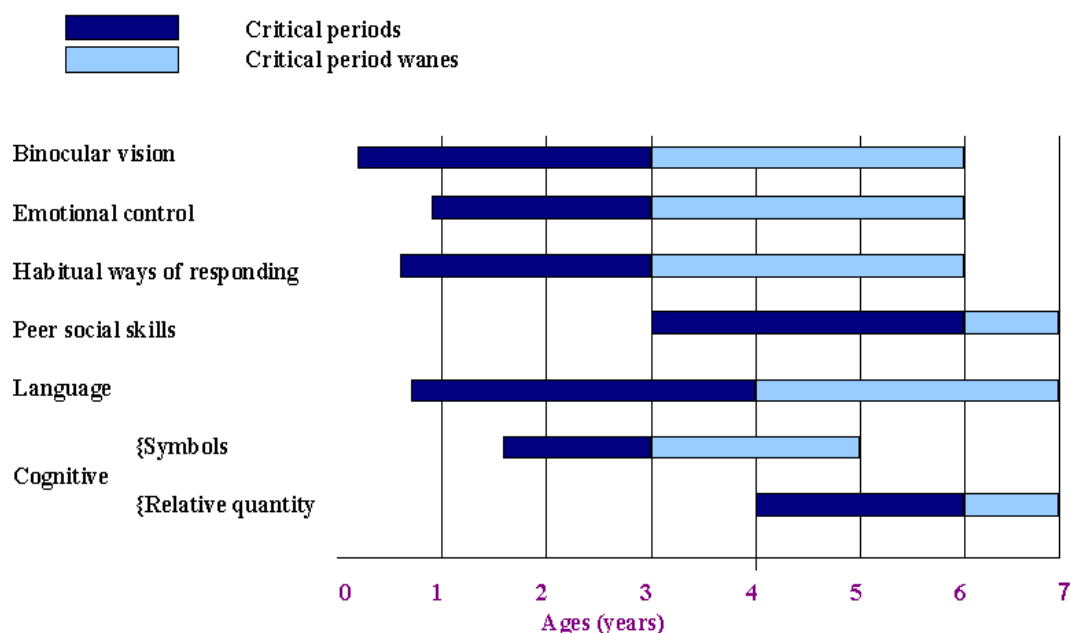
Neuroscience and brain research

One of the most effective and powerful arguments for increased focus in the early years has been the growing body of neuroscience and brain research¹ (Lally, 1998; Mustard, 2002; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). The science of brain research presents evidence of the importance of the early childhood years through the concept that there are key critical periods in which the brain develops. These are put forward as windows of opportunity for the neurons in the brain to connect and develop (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Figure 2.2 shows a graph that depicts periods of brain

¹ Neuroscience focuses on a study of the nervous system. Brain research focuses on specific aspects of neuroscience research (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Within this thesis neuroscience and brain research are conceptualised as inter-related.

development (Eliot, 1999). This visual representation clearly illustrates the windows for learning.

CRITICAL PERIODS FOR SOME ASPECTS OF BRAIN DEVELOPMENT AND FUNCTION



Source: Eliot, L. (1999). *What's going on in there? How the brain and mind develop in the first five year of life*. London: Penguin

Figure 2.2. Critical periods for brain development.

Neuroscience draws attention to the age of children and opportunities for their development. It also calls attention to nurturing and care in early childhood: “The early nurturance of infants and toddlers is seen to be of major importance because of the extraordinary neurological development that occurs in this period” (OECD, 2006, p. 39). Additionally, neuroscience and brain research orients child care to a more developmental approach (OECD, 2006, p. 39).

MacNaughton (2004b, p. 100) describes the “seductiveness and allure” of brain research to “establish ‘beyond reasonable doubt’ that early childhood matters”. A case in point is a recent print advertisement for Goodstart Early Learning that included: “We know children are born ready to learn. But few of us are aware of the impact early experiences have on brain development during the first five years” (Woman’s Day, 2012). In examples such as this, brain research is used in popular culture—a women’s magazine—to emphasise the idea that the early years are

incredibly important for brain development. This research is introduced as new, and adds to what has been known: that children are “ready to learn”.

Given that children are central to early childhood, early childhood contexts, and the work of the early childhood teacher, images of children and some of the key discourses that were read in the literature are mapped in the following section.

2.1.2 Children

This section turns to some of the discourses that shape understandings of children and childhood. In the field of early childhood terms such as “constructions of children/childhood” (James, Jenks, & Prout, 1998) or “image of the child” (Malaguzzi, 1998; Rinaldi, 2006) are used to describe different theoretical understandings and beliefs about children and childhood. A number of writers in early childhood have suggested that constructions of childhood provide useful ways to consider how early childhood is shaped (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2007; Moss & Petrie, 2002; Rinaldi, 2006). Constructions of childhood and images of children are therefore useful in order to “think critically about the nature, role and purposes of ECE” (Mitchell, 2010, p. 330). In this thesis the term *images of children* (plural) is used to denote the multiplicity of images and diversities of children. This section also turns attention to approaches to pedagogy and quality in early childhood.

Images of children and childhood

Different views of the child are commonly found in texts that inform understandings of children and childhood (see, for example, James et al., 1998; Noddings, 1992; Rosseau, 1991). These different *images of the children*² are historically and socially constructed at different points in time, “acquired through the system of representations which every social group develops in the course of its history” (Rinaldi, 2006, p. 105).

Some of the images of children include children as loving, innocent, sweet; children as empty vessels, a *tabula rasa*, to be filled with knowledge and learning; children as developing along a continuum of stages; children as capable and competent; children as citizens with rights (Dahlberg et al., 2007; James et al., 1998; Noddings, 1992; Rinaldi, 2006). These, and other images that infiltrate early

² Images of children (James et al., 1998) or the *image of the child* (Malaguzzi, 1998; Rinaldi, 2006) reflect different theoretical understandings and views of children and childhood.

childhood, are shaped by theories and are integral to work with young children. Some of these images that were identified as prominent in the literature are now discussed.

Developmental theories purport an age-stage approach to a child's "progression" (Berk, 2009). This calls for an early childhood teacher to be knowledgeable about such theory to ensure that children meet age-appropriate milestones (Berk, 2009; James et al., 1998). One aspect of children's development, social development, is considered paramount in early childhood (Bredekamp & Copple, 2009). Play is one method for understanding social development, with child development theory proposing that children's play develops in a linear way. This theory purports that first children engage in a *non-social activity* or solitary play, then parallel play, moving into associative play, and finally to cooperative play (Berk, 2009).

Another image of children as capable of decision making, thinking, theorising, and contributing to the curriculum paints a picture of children who are *competent* (Gardner, 1983, 1993). This image calls for particular approaches to teaching and engaging with children and aligns with a socio-constructivist approach (Bruner, 1978; Vygotsky, 1978), in which the child and teacher are considered as co-constructors of knowledge. This approach, championed in the municipal preschools in Reggio Emilia (Malaguzzi, 1998; Rinaldi, 2006), resists the image of the child as developing and not yet mature. It calls for a positioning of a child with potential and possibilities (Rinaldi, 2006).

Children with rights is another image that circulates in early childhood. Again, the municipal preschool programs in Reggio Emilia propose rights of children for who they are here and now—not who they will become (Malaguzzi, 1998)—as central to their programs. Children's *participation rights* to contribute to curriculum content and decision making has also emerged (Theobald, Danby, & Ailwood, 2011). *Children's rights* provides an alternative way of framing the early years, and makes a call for funding that is for children *here and now* not for what they might become or contribute to the economy (Penn, 2011b; Sidoti, 2008).

A linear view of images of childhood indicates that one discursive understanding of children is preferred independently of the other. This view ignores that images are simultaneously at play, interacting with one another to create

multiple ways of seeing children. A look to “multiple readings” (Ryan & Grieshaber, 2005) of theoretical perspectives is a way to encourage early childhood teachers to reconsider images of the child. In an example using developmentally appropriate practice, Ryan and Grieshaber (2005) suggest a critique of principles and practices, which encourages students to “construct their own understandings” from different theoretical perspectives. This approach develops understandings about how “multiple and competing discourses” inform teaching practices, and how these meanings affect “differing effects of power” (p. 6). An approach that encourages multiple readings and understandings of different theoretical perspectives enables points of resistance to dominant discourses that may permeate constructions of the image of the child.

Texts have emerged that open possibilities for “thinking otherwise” (Ball, 1998, p. 81) about images of children. For example, *Imagining Children Otherwise* (O’Loughlin & Johnson, 2010) looks to reconceptualising views of children and childhood. This text, and others (see, for example, Fuller, 2007; O’Loughlin, 2009), interrogate “normative conceptions of childhood” (Bloch, 2010, p. x). In doing so, they open possibilities to look critically and to stand up to the “hegemonic forces” (O’Loughlin, 2010, p. 3) that work as regimes of truth within early childhood.

Approaches to pedagogy

Alongside images of children, sit different approaches to pedagogy that have emerged in the field of early childhood. In this section, five of these approaches that were prominent in the literature are outlined: play, developmentally appropriate practices (DAP), scaffolding, outcomes-based education and “pedagogy of relationships and listening” (Rinaldi, 2006).

Play and learning through play are key approaches to pedagogy in early childhood (Bredekamp, 1987; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, 2009; James et al., 1998; Siraj-Blatchford & Sylva, 2004; Weber, 1984). As part of an approach to pedagogy through which children learn, “play comes naturally to 3–5 year olds” (Perry, 1998, p. 1). The “power of play spoken as a learning medium” (Arthur, Beecher, Death, Dockett, & Farmer, 2012, p. 100) positions play as central to the work of early childhood teachers.

Historically, play as pedagogy has been central to early childhood programs. The Montessori preschool programs are based on the premise that children learn

through play (Montessori, 1914). The “kindergartens” that were established by Froebel, were inspired and developed around the concept of play as learning, pleasurable and fun (Weber, 1984). The science of play is also drawn on to shape understandings of play in early childhood. For example, Piaget’s constructivist theory (Piaget, 1955) purports that children learn through the use of materials. The materials enable discovery learning, but still do so through exploration and play (Bredekamp & Copple, 2009; Elkind, 2009).

However, play is “an elusive concept” (Ailwood, 2003a, p. 288). Ailwood (2003a) notes the “most dominant influence” on discourses of play are developmental discourses. The way in which play has been taken up as a “mantra” and “the glorification of play as functional, voluntary and co-operative soon turns out to be idealised” (Burman, 1994, p. 166). Play is “often promoted as a universal and almost magical ‘fix’ in the early years” (Grieshaber & McArdle, 2010, p. 2), and is thus, ingrained into early childhood pedagogy.

Alongside play is another approach to pedagogy: developmentally appropriate practices (DAP) (Bredekamp, 1987; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, 2009). DAP draws on developmental theories and calls for children to be supported through stages of learning. Heavily influenced by Piaget’s approach to age/stage development, Vygotsky, Erikson and Kohlberg, DAP refers to “teacher-supported play” (Ailwood, 2003a). If a child does not meet particular milestones, a program of intervention may be determined to assist the achievement of developmental goals. DAP has become a key influence in the work of early childhood teachers, who, through observations, checklists, running records and event samples, determine if a child may have particular developmental needs (Beatty, 2004).

DAP has been the subject of critique and subsequent reconceptualisation, with questions raised about how as a discourse it positions early childhood within discursive practices of power, privilege and truth (Derman-Sparks, 1989; Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2010; Flee, 1995; Grieshaber, 2000; Lubeck, 1998a, 1998b; MacNaughton, 2003, 2005).

The third approach to pedagogy outlined is scaffolding. As an approach to pedagogy, scaffolding is also connected to play and DAP, and is based upon cognitive and social theories about how children learn. The term scaffolding signifies that children build on knowledge and skills that they already have (Bruner, 1966) and

assumes a partnership between the teacher and child (Berk & Winsler, 1995). In scaffolding, the role of the teacher is to “provide the assistance necessary to enable learners to accomplish tasks” (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005, p. 9). The teacher, with knowledge and competence, works within the learner’s Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Berk & Winsler, 1995). This mode of learning focuses on partnership, collaboration and co-construction of meaning. Scaffolding supports children’s learning, changing the level of support so that children are able to reach their developmental potential, with particular focus on cognitive development to suit the cognitive potential of the child (Vygotsky, 1978).

Another approach to pedagogy is an outcomes approach. A prescribed standardised curriculum includes learning areas that influence program content and approaches to teaching (Killen, 2000; Spady, 1994). An outcomes-based approach has come into early childhood; its “key focus is improving [learning] outcomes—starting with the earliest years, moving through school and into the training system” (COAG Communiqué, 2007).

A number of educators have challenged and critiqued outcomes-based education. In the United States, the initiative called Race to the Top focuses on outcomes, assessment and measurement. In resistance to this paradigm, which Genishi & Haas Dyson (2012) suggest produces “reductionist benchmarks” (p. 18), they propose that a “parallel universe” exists in which teachers are “resistant to the single-minded goal of producing young academics” (p. 20). Luke (2011) also maps out the problem with scientific measurability, which draws on “positivist and developmentalist models of education and leads to standardization of practice” (p. 371). The “standardisation of childhood”, including measurement of outcomes, is equally questioned by Fuller (2007).

The final approach to pedagogy that is considered here is “pedagogy of relationships and listening” (Rinaldi, 2006). This approach proposes that “children are the most avid seekers of meaning and significance, and that they produce interpretative theories” (p. 113). Children are viewed as competent, with the competence defined through adult expectations of the child. Moreover, the pedagogy of relationships and listening positions the youngest of children as capable of thinking and theorising about their world.

The different approaches to pedagogy that have been outlined in this section—play, DAP, scaffolding, outcomes-based education, and pedagogy of relationships and listening—call for particular skills, knowledge and expertise from the early childhood teacher. Whatever the pedagogical approach, there is growing interest in measurement of the effectiveness of pedagogy, policy, and children and families’ experiences in early childhood. Quality has been identified to provide such assurance and is examined in the following section.

Quality

Quality is a term that has gained increased prominence in early childhood in recent years (Ishimine, Tayler, & Thorpe, 2009; Laevers, 1994; OECD, 2006; Tayler et al., 2006; Urban, 2004), with claims of “the better the quality of child care and early education, the better it is for the child’s development” (OECD, 2006, p. 165). Links between neuroscience and brain research, and outcomes for children and quality have emerged (American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, & National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care, 2002; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHD], 1999) and resulted in outcomes-based measures with a focus on quality. The appropriateness of child care for children is, to an extent, defined through the quality of the child care.

With the importance of quality there has been a raft of quality measures in early childhood. The Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS) (Harms, Cryer, & Clifford, 1998) and the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS) (Harms, Cryer, & Clifford, 2006) are two quality measurement tools to support research and program improvement in long day care. In Australia, the ECERS was used as a basis for developing the Quality Improvement and Accreditation System (QIAS) (National Childcare Accreditation Council [NCAC], 2005) to consider and measure quality in child care, and more recently, it was used to develop the NQF (DEEWR, 2012).

Quality is a construction contingent on political, cultural and contextual features, and therefore, it is complex to define and difficult to measure (Dahlberg et al., 2007; Tobin, Hsueh, & Karasawa, 2009). The ways in which quality may be understood in one country may vary considerably to the ways in which quality is contextualised in another (see, for example, Penn, 2011b; Tobin, 2005). On this premise, “quality in early childhood education should be a process rather than a

product, an ongoing conversation rather than a document” (Tobin, 2005, p. 434). Dahlberg and Moss (2005) also highlight the risk of quality being “reduced to a set of criteria that constitutes a norm” and that is “assessed using a technical instrument that measures the conformity of a service to the norm” (p. 9). Thus, there is a risk in assuming that quality is objective and is able to be measured and moderated as such.

One of the key indicators of quality that appears to be agreed on in the literature is staff qualifications (Ishimine et al., 2009; Penn, 2011b; Walsh & Gardner, 2005). The qualification of staff in early childhood is seen as “key to high quality services” (OECD, 2006, p. 157). Qualifications are examined in the following section, which focuses on issues of early childhood workforce.

2.1.3 Teachers/workforce

In this third section of the nodal point about early childhood, attention is turned to the early childhood workforce, and in particular, early childhood teachers. Earlier in this chapter, the proposed universal access strategy (DEEWR, 2009b, 2009c) was outlined. This new approach for universal preschool requires four-year degree-qualified early childhood teachers to work in before-school contexts, including child care. This initiative has implications for the early childhood workforce.

The early childhood workforce is made up, predominantly, of women (Moss, 2006; Osgood, 2012; Osgood, Francis, & Archer, 2006). The gendered or feminised nature of the workforce in early childhood is defined through both the high percentage of women who constitute the workforce, and the feminised nature of the work (Osgood, 2012). In sectors with a high proportion of women in the workforce, there is consistently lower pay, conditions and recognition (Pocock, 2006; Whitehouse, 2011). In Australia, the majority (94.4%) of the early childhood workforce are female (Social Research Centre DEEWR, 2011, p. 2). Early childhood workers continue to be haunted by notions that their jobs are “women’s work” that comes naturally and that any woman can do (Ailwood, 2008b; Osgood, 2012).

The early childhood workforce is shaped, to an extent, by divisions between early education and child care (Moss, 2006; Osgood, 2012; Press, 2009; Stonehouse, 1994; Tayler, 2011). The value placed on work in early childhood has been attributed, in part, to delineations between education and care, discussed earlier in this chapter. It is argued that it is because “... governments and parents have not

traditionally seen ECEC workers as providers of educational services” that “society has not acknowledged the true value of their work” (Productivity Commission, 2011, p. 71). These education and care policy complexities were examined in Section 2.1.1.

Part of the complexity for the early childhood workforce pertains to qualification requirements. In Australia, different jurisdictions in individual states and territories have prescribed qualification requirements governed through relevant legislation (see, for example, Queensland Government, 2003). More recently, a national framework has been developed that includes consistent qualification requirements across all states and territories (DEEWR, 2012). Conditions of employment in child care are in accordance with state and territory awards that prescribe provisions such as leave allowances and rates of pay (see, for example, Queensland Industrial Relations Commission [QIRC], 2012a). This award was recently revised to reflect a “modern” federal award (Australian Industrial Relations Commission [AIRC], 2010). Qualification requirements and conditions of employment have relevance to this inquiry into early childhood teachers’ professional identities and literature pertaining to each is examined in the following sections.

Qualifications

The separation between staff in child care and staff in other before-school contexts or kindergarten is attributed in part to the qualification requirements (Moss, 2006; Osgood, 2012). In the UK, for example, this is seen in an “elite body of teachers in nursery and reception classes and a much larger body of ‘child care workers’” (Osgood, 2012, p. 7). An outcome of teachers with a degree and those with “lower levels of training and qualifications” (p. 7) has seen a “two-tier” (p. 7) system of early childhood. A recent report in Australia described the early childhood workforce as made up of two groups (Productivity Commission, 2011, p. 204). The first group consisted of “highly skilled tertiary trained specialists”, and the second, “lower skilled with low level qualifications”. A census of the profile of staff in child care indicated that of those who were described as “contact” staff (that is, their primary role was with a group of children), 6% held a four-year bachelor degree, and 3.4% held a three-year bachelor degree (Social Research Centre DEEWR, 2011).

A key workforce strategy in early childhood has been to up skill staff, including increasing the number of qualified teachers in before-school contexts. One

of the reasons that there is such interest in qualifications and staff training is that they are seen as “key indicators of the quality outcomes for children in early childhood programs” (Tayler et al., 2006, p. 59). In addition to the benefits to children of having teacher-qualified staff, benefits for the economy have also been put forward (Access Economics, 2009; Productivity Commission, 2011). Additionally, these benefits have been championed by quality assurance authorities: “improving educator qualifications is important with substantial research confirming that higher qualified educators improve outcomes for children” (ACECQA, 2012). There has also been argument for higher levels of staff qualifications within the field:

we find it startling that questions are being raised about whether educators in early childhood centres should be qualified, when we now know so much more about the significance for life-long learning of the early years and about the complexity of the care and education task. (Carr & Mitchell, 2010)

At the same time, the benefits of the length of qualification, that is, two, three or four years, is contested (Early et al., 2007; Ishimine et al., 2009). The links between teacher-qualifications and outcomes for children’s development and learning are cited in some research as inconclusive (see, for example, Early et al., 2007; Mashburn et al., 2008; Webb, 2009). Moreover, resistance to mandating teacher-degree qualification may come for other reasons associated with cost: “governments often fear the funding consequences of raising staff qualifications” (OECD, 2006, p. 161).

Despite continuing debate about the benefits of degree-qualification and quality, there is growing momentum in early childhood to increase staff qualifications, which includes a teaching degree as the new requirement. Developments in the early childhood workforce have been occurring internationally (see, for example, OECD, 2006; Penn, 2011b; Press, 2009; Tobin, 2005). Examples that have been examined in the literature include initiatives in the UK (Moss, 2006; Osgood, 2012), which aims to be “the best in the world, with a better qualified workforce” (Department for Education and Skills [DfES], 2005); the state of New Jersey in the United States (Ryan & Ackerman, 2005); New Zealand (Carr & Mitchell, 2010); and more recently, Australia (DEEWR, 2009b, 2009c).

It is notable that despite the provisions across many countries to increase staff qualification requirements to a teaching degree, the focus has been on programs for

children aged 3 to 6 years. One such example is a strategic plan developed in New Zealand, which addressed early childhood services for children younger than school age. According to the plan, 70% of staff working in these services should be teacher qualified, with the other 30% of staff to be enrolled in a teacher qualification by 2012 (Mitchell & Brooking, 2007). Notwithstanding this plan, staff in programs for those aged 3 to 6 are “more likely to hold three- or four-year university” or “two-year college” degrees (OECD, 2006, p. 158). Staff in programs for children aged 0 to 3 are more likely to hold qualifications ranging “from no training whatsoever to a post baccalaureate 3-year professional education ... or a two-year college degree” (p. 158).

In Australia, most states and territories have not required a degree qualification to work in child care. However, a degree has been required to work as a teacher in kindergarten/preschool programs for children aged 3 to 6. An exception to this qualification requirement is in New South Wales. In this state, the regulations for before-school contexts, inclusive of kindergarten, preschool *and* child care, contain a provision for a “teacher” who holds a “degree or diploma in early childhood education from a university” (NSW Government, 2004). This qualification must be a minimum three-year qualification, with the number of degree or diploma qualified staff determined by the number of children in the centre. This regulation has now been overridden by the new NQF that reflects similar requirements (DEEWR, 2012), though the maximum qualification requirement is a three-year diploma. The universal access strategy (DEEWR, 2009b) will sit alongside these qualifications requirements, and also call for four-year qualified teachers to work in before-school contexts, including child care.

The length of a teaching qualification in Australia has changed considerably from when it was initially a certificate course. In Queensland, the authority responsible for registering teachers, the Queensland College of Teachers (QCT), requires a four-year degree for teacher registration (QCT, 2006). Yet, this has not always been the case; a degree or diploma of one, two or three years has previously been the required qualification. When the new *Professional Standards for Queensland teachers* (QCT, 2006) were developed child care and kindergarten were not recognised as workplaces that would enable teachers to attain teacher registration—only schools were recognised. Although changes to these standards

now include kindergarten, early childhood teachers who work in child care remain ineligible for teacher registration.

In Queensland in mid-2011, the Office of Early Childhood Education and Care, located within the Department of Education and Training (DET), released an *Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Action Plan 2011–2014* (DET, 2011). This plan aimed to put into place the staff qualification changes proposed by the NQF. In Queensland, a range of initiatives are in place, including 200 government sponsored scholarships for a four-year early childhood teaching qualification.

Courses and programs

Early childhood courses and programs in Australia are offered under a number of different arrangements. The programs can be categorised into two main types (Productivity Commission, 2011). First, bachelor degree programs in teaching are three or four years in duration and are generally offered through universities (Watson & Axford, 2008). Second, other qualifications, including advanced diploma, diploma and certificate programs, are offered through VET programs, either through TAFE institutions or RTOs (Productivity Commission, 2011). Courses in both categories are offered in internal or external modes, and use different approaches to pedagogy. VET courses are competency based, and thus, include a number of defined learning outcomes that must be demonstrated in order to attain the qualification. University-degree programs must meet multiple accreditation requirements of the Commonwealth Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) and state teacher registration bodies. Additionally, early childhood teacher education programs must comply with ACECQA guidelines. Guidelines for these bodies prescribe particular units or subjects of study and the number of days for field experience in different contexts.

Position titles

In early childhood, position titles and descriptions vary across different contexts. Specific requirements for qualifications to work in positions were, in the past, included in the relevant state or territory legislation and regulations. In Queensland this has been the *Queensland Child Care Regulations* (Queensland Government, 2003). New Commonwealth legislation, *Education and Care Services National Regulations* (Ministerial Council for Education, 2011), now governs qualification requirements and assigns new position titles, as captured in the NQF

(DEEWR, 2012). In addition to these requirements, the universal access strategy requires that child care workers are four-year degree-qualified teachers (DEEWR, 2009b). Table 2.1 captures some of the required changes, with a focus on position titles and work in child care. The state of Queensland, where this inquiry was located, has been used as an example. The table illustrates the alignment between position title and qualification.

Table 2.1

Legislation, Position Titles and Required Qualifications for Before-School Contexts, Including Child Care, in Queensland

Legislation	Position title	Minimum qualification required and duration
<i>Child Care Act 2002 and Child Care Regulation 2003</i> (Queensland Government, 2003)	Director Group Leader Assistant	Advanced diploma (2 years) Diploma (2 years) Certificate III (1 year)
<i>Education and Care Services National Law 2011</i> (Queensland Government, 2011)	Supervisor Educational Leader Educator Carer	Bachelor degree (3 years) Bachelor degree (3 years) Diploma (2 years) Certificate III (1 year)
<i>Universal Access strategy</i> (DEEWR, 2009b)	Early Childhood Teacher	Bachelor degree (4 years)

By contrast, the qualification and associated position titles in other early childhood contexts, kindergarten/preschool and lower primary school classrooms are simpler. Tables 2.2 and 2.3 illustrate the legislation/position title and qualification requirements to work as a teacher in kindergartens/preschools (Table 2.2) and primary school (Table 2.3).

Table 2.2

Legislation, Position Titles and Required Qualifications for Kindergarten/Preschool in Queensland

Legislation	Position title	Minimum qualification required
<i>Professional standards for Queensland teachers</i> (QCT, 2006)	Teacher	Bachelor degree (4 years)
<i>Universal Access strategy</i> (DEEWR, 2009b)	Early Childhood Teacher	Bachelor degree (4 years)

Table 2.3

Legislation, Position Titles and Required Qualifications for Primary School in Queensland

Legislation	Position title	Minimum qualification required
<i>Queensland College of Teachers (QCT)</i>	Teacher	Bachelor degree (4 years)

In early childhood, the name given to the position can denote the level of qualifications (Adams, 2008) and suggest leadership and rank (Rodd, 2006). The issue of titles and how people in the workplace are named is not simply a matter of semantics. There is power and status that comes with titles. The most obvious example of a workplace hierarchy is in the defence forces. In the army, a Private defers to a Sergeant, who defers to a Captain, and so on. The clear demarcation of rank between, say, a Private and a Sergeant affords status and power. This status is marked by “organisational artefacts” (Schein, 2005) such as symbols on a uniform, which work to govern who should salute and give orders to whom.

In Alain de Botton’s book *The pleasures and sorrows of work* (2009), he examines a wide range of vocations. The fulfilment that jobs/positions afford in fields as diverse as rocket science, painting and accountancy is explored. In one chapter, de Botton visits a biscuit factory to meet with the Design Director, who is assigned importance and status by this position title, but whose job is actually to make decisions about types of biscuits. There is a stark contrast between Design Director and another possible job title for the same work: biscuit maker. Early childhood teachers working in child care are assigned various titles; in addition to Teacher, some may also be Educational Leader, Supervisor, or choose to work with the position title of Carer.

Title of Director

The position title of Director has a long history in early childhood. In a Montessori classroom the teacher is an “unobtrusive director” (Edwards, 2002, p. 2) as children engage in self-directed learning experiences (Kramer, 1988). This role of directing involves guiding children in self-paced learning experiences. “Pedagogical director” (Dahlberg et al., 2007) is the term used in the municipal preschools in Reggio Emilia to denote a position that takes a leadership role in classroom

pedagogy. Director is also a term used to delineate a leadership and management role in early childhood contexts, including child care and kindergarten. In the book *Visionary Director* (Carter & Curtis, 1998), the introduction opens with: “Most directors of early childhood programs come to their positions with little experience of education to prepare them for the awesome task of trying to run a quality program with inadequate facilities, resources and staff” (p. 1). In the UK, Manager or Principal is the title used to describe the lead or head role in an early childhood centre, or nursery school (Adams, 2008). In Australia, early childhood centres use the title of Director to denote a key leadership role. The role of the Director is to oversee, to ensure compliance, and in many cases, to also teach, by having contact with a class of children (hence the descriptors of contact Director or non-contact Director). With the NQF, the previous title of Director is now Supervisor or Educational Leader (DEEWR, 2012; Queensland Government, 2011).

Under the universal access strategy (COAG, 2009a, 2009b; Rudd & Macklin, 2007b) a four-year qualified teacher in child care will potentially be supervised by a three-year qualified Director / Supervisor / Educational Leader. A more-qualified staff member being supervised by a less-qualified staff member is not unusual and may happen in a range of workplaces. A teacher in a school, for instance, may hold a Master’s qualification, a higher degree than the Principal, who is required to hold at a minimum a four-year qualification. Uniquely, the universal access strategy qualification requirement insists that a more-qualified member of staff is subordinate to a less-qualified member of staff. This organisational structure, including lines of reporting, is captured in Figure 2.3. This diagram illustrates an organisational structure common to child care centres and uses the example of a three-room centre. This delineates position titles used under the previous legislation (with new position titles from the NQF shown in brackets) to capture those titles that were in use at the time of data collection for this inquiry.

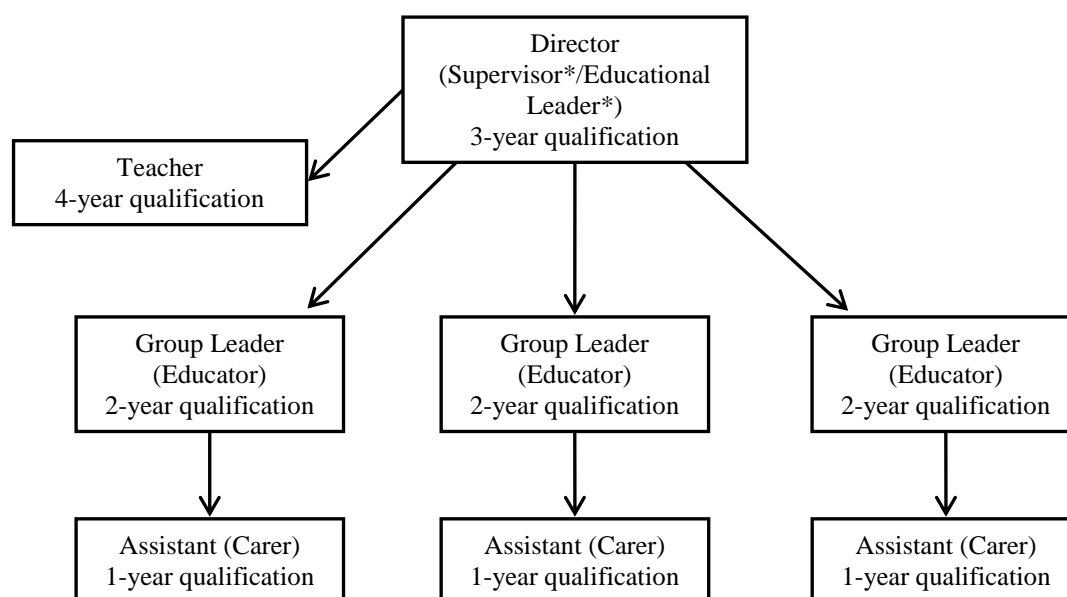


Figure 2.3. Organisational structure of a child care centre.

(* Denotes new position titles from the National Quality Framework)

Conditions

The different awards for different early childhood contexts add to the complexity of workforce issues. There are significant differences in pay and conditions with “early childhood educators working closest to the school gate are better trained and rewarded” (OECD, 2006, p. 158). The pay and conditions for the early childhood workforce are governed through industrial awards. A four-year degree-qualified early childhood teacher in a primary school on the first salary level will earn up to \$10,000 more per year (QIRC, 2012c) than an early childhood teacher on the first salary level in child care (QIRC, 2012a). This starting salary for a teacher in kindergarten/preschool is comparable with child care (QIRC, 2012b). The salary differentiation widens with years of experience, with a more substantial earning capacity in primary schools. An early childhood teacher with some years of experience may, upon promotion, be appointed as primary school Head of Curriculum (HOC). In this role, a teacher in a primary school would earn approximately \$34,000 per year more than an early childhood teacher employed as the Director/Supervisor in a child care centre with the same years of experience (QIRC, 2012a, 2012c).

Conditions of employment also vary considerably. The most notable difference is the annual leave allowances. A teacher in primary school or kindergarten/preschool is entitled to approximately 10 weeks per year of school holidays (QIRC,

2012a, 2012c). By contrast, a teacher in a child care centre is entitled to four weeks of annual leave. Another variation is the hours of work. Because of the nature of child care, there are generally extended hours of operation. Staff in child care may be required to work an early shift or a late shift between the hours of 6.00am and 7.00pm. By contrast, a teacher in a kindergarten or primary school generally has contact hours with children between 9:00am and 3:00pm (QIRC, 2012a, 2012c). Additional conditions, such as programming time or non-contact time, vary considerably across different contexts, with provisions in primary schools the most generous.

There have been concerted campaigns by unions in Australia to address pay and condition disparities that exist across different early childhood settings. A campaign waged in ACT/NSW by the Independent Education Union, which represents teachers in child care, has emphasised that “Teachers are Teachers” (Independent Education Union ACT/NSW, 2012). In response to the inconsistencies outlined above, this campaign has called for all early childhood teachers to have pay parity.

The separation of education and care has implications for staff pay and conditions. Yet, it was noted in *Starting Strong II* that:

In countries with integrated services, conditions for workers are considerably better as, in general, thought has been given to making clear professional profiles with fixed salaries and work conditions. (OECD, 2006, p. 163)

In New Zealand, the arrangement for early childhood contexts sees greater alignment between preschool and child care, and in addition, teachers in kindergartens and schools have pay parity (Mitchell & Brooking, 2007). However, in New Zealand, the conditions of employment vary across early childhood contexts, mostly in relation to approximately 10 weeks of school holidays in kindergarten versus four weeks annual leave in education and care centres (Mitchell, 2008).

Staff turnover

Pay and conditions have been cited as key reasons for high staff turnover in early childhood (Whitebook & Sakai, 2003). A study into child care quality in California found that staff remuneration was a considerable reason that staff left their workplace (Whitebook & Sakai, 2003). In Australia, the high staff turnover rate in

child care is indicative, it is argued, by low pay and conditions (Social Research Centre DEEWR, 2011). The disparities in pay and conditions outlined above appear to remain, at least in the short term, with the new awards leaving a shortfall of approximately \$10,000 for a teacher in child care, compared with a teacher in a primary school (QIRC, 2012a, 2012c).

Pay and conditions have been cited as reasons for staff leaving child care and moving into other educational contexts, including primary school: “Until the wages and working conditions in child care improve, the pathways to university in early childhood will simply be pathways *out of* child care and into education, rather than career pathways within the profession of ECEC as a whole” (Watson, 2006b, p. 49, original emphasis). A recent report that examined the impact of the new NQF on the early childhood workforce noted: “Requirement for Educational Leaders to hold a degree qualification, such as that required of Primary School teachers, may see leakage of workers at this level to roles in primary education sectors that are more highly paid” (Productivity Commission, 2011, p. 5). Paradoxically, the up skilling of the early childhood workforce may result in the newly qualified early childhood teachers moving to other early childhood contexts where pay and conditions are better. Therefore, concerns will remain about staff turnover in child care.

Research is emerging that unpacks other reasons for staff leaving child care. For example, Ryan and Whitebook (2011) examine the characteristics, work environments and practices of early childhood educators working directly with children. They suggest that attention to teacher preparation programs and ongoing professional development is an important component of workforce research. Elsewhere, Whitebook (2012) also examines the work environments in which early childhood educators spend their days, alongside issues of workforce and staff turnover.

This first and most substantial nodal point of the literature review has examined early childhood. The three sub-sections in this section—education and care, children, and teachers/workforce—enabled consideration of some of the key issues that circulate in the field of early childhood to be examined. The next section, though not as substantial in length as the first section, is similarly central to the focus of this inquiry.

2.2 PROFESSIONALISM

The second section of the literature review explores the emergence of professionalism in early childhood. An examination of professionalism, and its infiltration into many fields, provides a landscape upon which to consider the permeation of professionalism into early childhood.

A middle-class notion of professionalism positions occupation as a central marker of modern identity (Cowman & Jackson, 2005). Many occupations that have, in the recent past, been identified and constructed in terms of technical attributes are now referred to as professions (Robson, 2006; Wise, 2005; Yinger, 2005). To become a profession or “the making of a profession” is referred to as professionalisation. An example is the professionalisation of nursing (James & Willis, 2001; Mahony, 2003; Nelson, 2001; Summers, 1998). In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the professional formation of nursing was constructed through the issues of presentation of self and institutional shaping. It is argued that the inculcation of a specific set of attributes created “the nurse” (Nelson, 2001). Increasingly, professionalisation has gained momentum across traditionally female-dominated, attribute-based occupations (Rabe-Kleberg, 2006). Likewise, professionalisation has entered the early childhood practitioner lexicon.

But what constitutes a professional? And what makes an early childhood teacher a professional? Within this nodal point of professionalism, two points warrant further discussion: first, a genealogy of professionalism and its infusion into early childhood, and second, the emerging discourses of the professional, including the early childhood professional.

2.2.1 A genealogy of professionalism

Genealogy is employed here to record the “history of the present” of professionalism, and map how some of the discourses that shape professionalism “appear as events on the stage of historical process” (Foucault, 1984a, p. 86). A genealogy captures some of the discourses that have been circulated to produce professionalism.

To explain the emergence of professionalism, Yinger (2005) describes “the professional problem” as a consumer–client paradigm. The free-market economies and consumerism have changed the shape and identities of workers who have been

professionalised. Corporatisation has resulted in the infiltration of economic language and thought into public institutions (Yinger, 2005). This has brought about an emergent culture of performativity, one that McWilliam, Hatcher and Meadmore (1999) call “problematic and seductive” because the professional educator becomes part of an “enterprising culture”. Consideration of discourses of professionalism further reveal the impact that corporatisation has on professionals. An example within early childhood was the previous dominance of the corporate for-profit child care provider, ABC Learning Centres, and the impact of this enterprising culture in early childhood in Australia (ABC Learning Centres Limited, 2005, 2006).

The language of profession and professionalism emerged from occupations in the early eighteenth century, thereby distinguishing an initially small number of occupations, including religion, law and medicine (Sutherland, 2001). Features such as training, professional development and policies point towards professionalism, along with technical skills, specialist knowledge and qualifications, meeting high standards and regulations (Moriarty, 2000; Moss, 2006; Oberhuemer, 2004; Osgood, 2006; Waniganayake, 2001). Such a focus, in turn, enhances working conditions and the status of the professional worker (Moss, 2006; Oberhuemer, 2004).

Three models of professionalisation have been mapped by Tobias (2003). The first, a “professionalising model”, emphasises attributes, traits or characteristics, and a focus on knowledge. A second professional learning model recognises the historical dynamic in which professionalisation is oriented to processes. This approach includes a focus on ongoing professional learning. The third approach highlights the power and market monopolisation approach in which control over the economy is prioritised: “Knowledge production and practitioner training are, thus, central issues in the professionalisation process” (p. 449). This approach acknowledges professional education as playing a “key role in the formation of professional identities and in the production and reproduction of occupations as professions” (p. 449). Tobias’s (2003) map of professionalisation draws attention to the complex nature of professionalism. Additionally, it accentuates how the discourse of professionalism has emerged, and the ways in which it is linked to larger social and political discursive practices.

2.2.2 Discourses of professionalism

There are three generally accepted ideas about what constitutes a professional in the educational literature (Timperley & Alton-Lee, 2008). First, a professional must possess a large degree of talent and skill. Second, professionals must use a body of knowledge that supports their work. Third, professionals must have the autonomy to make decisions that marry skills with knowledge to solve complex problems. Proponents of this third conception of a professional argue that teachers need to engage in complex thinking to be effective in their jobs. These arguments are based on the idea that teaching is far more complex than any list of predetermined categories could hope to capture (Webb, 2009).

Two distinct discourses, managerial professionalism and democratic professionalism, dominate Australian education policy documents at both Commonwealth and state levels (Sachs, 2001, 2003). These discourses shape the work of teachers and teaching, setting “the limits of what can be said, thought and done with respect to debates and initiatives designed to enhance the political project of teacher professionalism” (Sachs, 2001, p. 151).

First, Sachs (2001) examines managerial professionalism, which highlights accountability, devolution and de-centralisation, and teacher professionalism “that gains its legitimacy through the promulgation of policies and the allocation of funds associated with those policies” (p. 152). Sachs links this discussion with schools, teachers, principals, regional office and central office. There are resonances with the recent Australian trend towards a corporatised model of child care (Sumsion, 2006; Wannan, 2005). For example, the management model of the corporate child care provider ABC Learning Centres included centrally administered policies and systems (ABC Learning Centres Limited, 2006).

Second, Sachs describes democratic professionalism, which demystifies professional work and strengthens relationships between teachers and other people associated with the school community. A key focus here is on participative decision making, collaboration and cooperative action. This is consistent with the focus in not-for profit/community-based child care to developing a sense of community with democracy and shared-decision making (Wannan, 2005). Oberhuemer (2004) takes up the concept of democratic professionalism specifically within early childhood, noting the focus on interactions with children, working with families, centre

management and leadership styles, and the underlying knowledge base. A collaborative approach where different voices within the community are listened to opens possibilities for considering professionalism and the professional early childhood practitioner (Rinaldi, 2006).

Hargreaves (2000) views teacher professionalism as evolving through four historical phases, maps the discourses that shape these phases. The first, “pre-professional” phase is identified as demanding, though not technically difficult. As “teacher education programmes and institutions ascended the ladder of status and acceptance, a more philosophical and theoretical base was made available to new teachers” (Hargreaves, 2000, p. 156). The “good” teacher is described as “‘devoted herself to her craft’, [with] demonstrated loyalty and [...] personal reward through service, ‘wherever the costs’” (p. 156). Devotion to teaching was also identified as a key indicator of professionalism in a study by Martinez, Desiderio, & Papakonstantinou (2010). When questions about the work of a teacher as a “job” or a “career” were put to preservice and graduate teachers, the responses highlighted “passion” and “career” as integral to a professionalism.

The second phase of teacher professionalism, “autonomy” (Hargreaves, 2000) is identified by “a challenge to the singularity of teaching and the unquestioned traditions on which it is based” (p. 161). This was marked by increases to pay for many teachers (e.g., in Britain, United States, Canada and Australia) and embedding teacher education in universities. In Queensland, where data was collected for my study, the Brisbane Kindergarten Teachers College / Brisbane College of Advanced Education (Gahan, Halliwell, Moss, & Sherwood, 2011) amalgamated with QUT, and thus, positioned early childhood teacher education within a university.

The third historical phase outlined by Hargreaves (2000) is “collegial professional”. In the 1980s, there was a shift away from autonomy towards working collaboratively with colleagues. Part of this phase was dealing with “uncertainty and complexity” (p. 165). The fourth and final historical phase that Hargreaves (2000) introduces is “post-professionalism”, in which the “context of teaching is changing dramatically, and older modernistic versions of professionalism and professionalization will not be sufficient to address these significant changes” (p. 165). One key change in early childhood is regulatory requirements that call for

compliance. The intersection between regulations and professionalism are explored in the following section.

2.2.3 Regulating the professional

Early childhood in Australia is going through a rapid state of legislative change. Since 2007 in particular, new regulatory frameworks have emerged as part of the ALP's education revolution policy, outlined above. These regulations have called for early childhood teachers to work within complex legislative and regulatory frameworks (Fenech, 2006; Fenech, Robertson, Sumsion, & Goodfellow, 2007).

Regulations are seen as both supporting and constraining professional work in early childhood (Fenech, 2006; Fenech, Sumsion, & Goodfellow, 2006; Grieshaber, 2000; Novinger & Brien, 2003). Research into the work of early childhood professionals in Sydney (Fenech et al., 2006) established links between the regulatory environment and professional practice. The study identified benefits of accreditation and regulations and, at the same time, shortcomings, including unfulfilled intentions and unintended outcomes. The researchers raised "the possibility that early childhood professionals may be acquiescing to the demand of regulatory bodies at the expense of their practical wisdom" (p. 56). An early childhood professional who focuses on practical considerations and "wise practice" (Goodfellow, 2003) works within the regulatory frameworks that are in place, though does not allow them to drive practice. In other words, the regulatory frameworks both enable and constrain the professional role.

The same mechanisms that are used to monitor, regulate and protect, however, may be "used to justify the claims of some groups to positions of privilege, power and monopoly in the labour market" (Tobias, 2003, p. 452). An example of this is government policy that allows expansion of the for-profit and corporate child care sector, representing an increase in their position in the market and concomitant influence in policy shifts and developments. According to Tobias (2003), privileging some groups may reduce "the level of wider accountability of these groups" (p. 452). An example was a case in Queensland with a strong lobby from for-profit and corporate child care in the review of the child care regulations (Queensland Government, 2003) and recently, the review of qualifications. There was a notable objection from Australian Child Care Alliance (ACCA), a professional body that

represents private child care providers. There were specific concerns raised over increased qualification requirements that would, it was claimed, increase child care fees for parents. Similar claims were made by the ACCA in January 2012 in response to the introduction of qualification requirements in the *National Quality Standards*: “... we are concerned about that and we would like to see things even pushed out further so that the pressure isn’t put onto our staff” (Dingle, 2012).

In a call to “emancipate early childhood teachers from technical, deprofessionalising constraints” (Fenech, Sumsion, & Shepherd, 2010), it is suggested that through discourses of advocacy and activism regulatory frameworks can be resisted. Osgood (2006) suggests that early childhood practitioners are “active in challenging, negotiating and reforming the discourses through which they are positioned and defined and therein lies the possibility for resisting the regulatory gaze” (p. 5). This perspective accentuates the complexities of being an early childhood professional and opens possibilities for multiple ways of performing or being professional.

2.2.4 Gendering the early childhood professional

The gendered nature of the early childhood professional is conceptualised in terms of the high percentage of women in the workforce (Osgood, 2012). Additionally, the nature of the work in early childhood is described as “feminised work”, requiring the “soft skills” (Hatcher, 2000, p. 153) of care, nurturance (Ailwood, 2008b; McBride, 2000) and love (Page, 2011). The high number of women in the early childhood workforce was examined in Section 2.1.3. Attention is now turned to maternalism discourses that circulate in early childhood and shape the work of the early childhood teacher.

The maternalism discourse dominates the career trajectories and professional identities of people working in feminised occupations, such as early childhood (Ailwood, 2008b; Bown, Sumsion & Press, 2010; Rabe-Kleberg, 2006). Moss (2006) draws on the maternalism discourse to describe a category of the early childhood worker as a “substitute mother” (p. 34). This construction positions early childhood work within care and domestic labour paradigms. Elsewhere in the literature, there are also calls to distinguish “professional” from “mother” (Dalli, 2002; McBride, 2000). Ailwood (2008b) suggests that the discourses of “motherhood and teacherhood” are intertwined, “thus enabling and legitimising the place of women in

the education of young children” (p. 159). Rabe-Kleberg (2006) highlights the interdependency of professionalism and maternalism and explains the complexities of these “two social phenomena” (p. 2). Her contention is that “motherliness (and female qualities in general) can contribute to the formation of a profession” (Rabe-Kleberg, 2006, p. 2). The maternalism discourse is further traced by Walkerdine (1992) as a “quasi-maternal nurturance” that allows women to watch over children through the performance of being a good teacher. It is argued that this orientation contributes to “the lack of symbolic value attached to the work that they [child care workers] undertake, and hence their public image and status” (Osgood, 2010, p. 16).

The early childhood professional as *carer* and as *caregiving* positions practitioners within a feminised paradigm. Kendall (2006) notes that the archetype of the caregiver is a position that is gendered and located within a discourse of gender relations. Although her research focuses on family roles, it is suggested here that the discourse of gender relations is linked to early childhood practitioners. Embedded in this discourse are expectations for women with young children to perform the kinds of tasks that female caregivers have traditionally performed (Kendall, 2006).

Partly in recognition of the importance of “soft skills” (Hatcher, 2000, p. 153), the quality of love has also been proposed as a key part of professionalism (Page, 2011). In research with mothers who accessed child care, a key factor that was identified as important for them was that there was love shown to their children. The term *professional love* is introduced by Page (2011) to capture the importance of this quality and hold this together with notions of *being* professional. The term professional love is also a way of distinguishing mother-love from love provided in a care situation (p. 323). Love was also highlighted as the second-top quality needed to work with children in an online survey conducted by the professional organisation Child Care Exchange (Neugebauer, 2011). The number one quality cited for early childhood teachers was a nurturing personality, followed by love of children. The third quality that was noted as important for early childhood teachers was a qualification: “BA in early childhood”. A degree qualification was seen as less important than the qualities of nurturance and love.

At the same time as a call for different ways of thinking about work in child care, the emergence of “professionalism” (Sutherland, 2001; Yinger, 2005) has permeated the field. In line with this, care for children has been described as

professional work, or “professional caring” (Ball, 1998, p. 169), which encourages the view that the care of children requires technical skills that denote an early childhood professional (Moss, 2006; Oberhuemer, 2005).

Child care workers, or “professional carers” (Ball, 1998, p. 170; de Botton, 2009, p. 310), are defined, to an extent, by the qualification held and the associated title or position. People who work in child care must hold different qualifications in order to work in particular position (for example, a two-year diploma is required to work as a group leader). The qualification requirements to work in a role in child care are prescribed by regulations (Office for Children Department of Communities, 2006; Queensland Government, 2003) (see Table 2.2). This requirement is relatively new, and in the past it was possible to work in child care, at least in Queensland, with no formal qualification.

The performance of being professional can be considered as what early childhood practitioners do at certain times and in particular places, rather than who that person is (Butler, 1990; Osgood, 2006). To view professional discourses as actively chosen by subjects enables early childhood practitioners to subvert and resist prevailing and dominant understandings of their professionalism (Osgood, 2006).

This section on professionalism has examined a genealogy of professionalism, and in doing so, has mapped some of the discourses that shape the early childhood teacher professional identities. Regulation discourses and gender discourses have also been examined. The review of literature now turns to preservice teacher education.

2.3 PRESERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION

The nature of preservice teacher education has relevance for this inquiry into early childhood teacher identities for a two key reasons. First, given the proposed staff qualification requirements that will necessitate a four-year university-qualified teacher to work in before-school contexts, there will be a significant demand on the workforce. Second, in the present study, the site for data collection for the talk-as-text was with preservice teachers.

A study by Flores and Day (2006) found the role of preservice education, alongside school culture and leadership, was a strong influence in determining “the kinds and relative stability and instability of professional identities” (p. 219). The

students in this study saw their preparation as inadequate to deal with the “complex and demanding nature of their daily job in schools and classrooms” (p. 224). This tension suggests that the course structure, unit content and the positioning of preservice teachers as technicians is worthy of consideration.

2.3.1 The nature of preservice teacher education

A central aim of preservice teacher education is to prepare students for teaching (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2009; Horowitz et al., 2009). The knowledge, skills and strategies acquired through teacher education courses will provide the necessary qualification to teach. Teacher preparation that equips teachers for “new times” calls for the consideration of the “knowledges, skills, values and attributes” that are required of “good teachers” (McArdle, 2010, p. 16) who will make a difference in children’s lives. Early childhood teacher education programs prepare students for work across a number of contexts. This work is complex work—a point made earlier in this chapter (see Section 2.1.1). Yet, it is claimed that teacher education courses often do not adequately prepare teachers for the complexities of their work (Flores & Day, 2006; Hatch, 1999; Hong, 2010; Timostuk & Ugaste, 2010).

The design of preservice teacher courses and programs has been the focus of attention in the literature (see for example, Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2009; Darling-Hammond, Hammerness, Grossman, Rust, & Shulman, 2009; Hatch, 1999; Horowitz et al., 2009; McArdle, 2010; Sumsion, 2005; Viruru, 2005). The content and pedagogical approaches work together to produce preservice teacher education that meets accreditation requirements (in the state of Queensland, this is through QCT and ATSIL) in addition to preparing teachers. The “common considerations in developing programs” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009, p. 391) suggest a program that has a framework across both the duration of the course and in each year of the course. McArdle (2010) warns that without attention to planning and such considerations there is the risk that “undergraduate degree programs can become ‘patchwork quilts’ with traces of the old and new stitched together, sometimes at the expense of coherence and integrity” (p. 60).

Preservice teacher education is “embedded in global economies, new technologies and marketisation” (Farrell, 2005, p. 9). Amid these, there is a challenge

for teacher educators to find ways to make connections with students, shifting the discourses that shape and reshape the landscape of teaching. In a globalised world, there can be a heightened risk of personal alienation and a sense of loss of community. Sumsion and Patterson (2004) point to the unexpected emergence of community in a preservice teacher education unit called Teachers as Researchers. The strategy, and associated building of community, lends support to reconceptualised ways of making connections with preservice teachers. Sumsion and Patterson's research project enabled preservice teachers to see their work in new and different ways and, in doing so, opened possibilities for multiple ways of being and performing as a teacher while linked with others in a community of learners and thinkers.

MacNaughton (2005) proposes that knowledge/power relations that dominate approaches to professional learning be reconsidered. Such a proposition in teacher education challenges a binary of *teacher-expert* and *preservice teacher non-expert* and opens possibilities for reconceptualising identities and the performance of being professional (Viruru, 2005). Possibilities are also offered through Moss's (2006) conception of "teacher as researcher" in which there is a continual seeking of "deeper understanding and new knowledge" (p. 36). This positions preservice teachers as competent and co-meaning makers who shape, and are shaped by, discourses available to them.

The concept of resilience is instrumental for teachers to remain in the early childhood profession (Sumsion, 2005) and such a trait reflects different and multiple understandings of the work of teachers. Hatch (1999) maintains that it is integral to the preparation for teaching that preservice teacher education courses and unit materials are constructed to reflect the complex nature of teachers' work. For example, along with the technicalities of the work of teachers, teacher educators can "explore with their students the day-to-day realities of working in schools" (Hatch, 1999, p. 239). Such realities include the characteristics of teachers' work (e.g. isolation, uncertainty, and "women's work"); working conditions (e.g. complexity of classrooms, schools as stressful, intensification of work); and coping and adapting (e.g. mechanisms used to cope with demands of work, teacher response to dilemmas).

Issues of ethics and a strong sense of political awareness have also been championed for teacher education. Yinger (2005) calls for this important public work to come to the centre of teaching as a profession and to become a cornerstone for our identities as educators. This places teacher educators in positions of influence, shaping and re-shaping identities of preservice teachers.

2.3.2 From technician to “reflexivity”

It is argued (see, for example, Hatch, 1999; MacNaughton, 2005; Moss, 2006; Sumsion, 2002a, 2005) that professional development and training in early childhood needs to move beyond a technical approach in which practitioners are taught the tricks of the trade, possessing a box of tools at the completion of their course. Rather, it is desirable for practitioners and, in the case of this research, preservice teachers, to be aware of discourses that enable and constrain their thinking, being and performance as professionals.

The idea of “reflexivity” in preservice teacher education is not new, though Sumsion (2005) suggests it evades much of the core teaching content. Osgood (2006) further highlights the importance for practitioners to become reflexive and develop the *professional self*. To be reflexive encourages critique, reflection and questioning of dominant discourses, and in doing so, the development of an awareness of how discursive practice might shape ways of being an early childhood practitioner.

Sumsion (2005) makes a call for three key tenets in preservice teacher education. First, she calls for reflexivity that “keeps alive the possibility of seeing and acting differently” (p. 198). Reflexivity or imagining otherwise provides the second thread of hope that “generates momentum for change” (p. 198). Third, Sumsion calls for “transformative change” whereby there is a rupture of “the bonds that tie us to old, ingrained habits and taken for granted practices and dislodge previously accepted certainties” (p. 198). These three threads provide frames for preservice teachers to “respond productively to the challenges, complexities, and uncertainties educators’ inevitably encounter through their professional lives” (pp. 198–199).

This section has examined the nature of preservice teacher education, with a focus on early childhood. The final nodal point in the literature review focuses on identities.

2.4 IDENTITIES

To understand which discourses are taken up by early childhood teachers in the constitution of their professional identities, it is useful to consider theories of identity. Modernist understandings of identities link a fixed and stable core *self* in relationship with professional knowledge and action (Watson, 2006a). Identity is viewed as a constant that does not change over time. This modernist approach to identities enables the development of devices such as personality scales, designed with psychological frames to determine particular personality types or identities. A deliberate untidying of modernist thinking about the fixed self can enable new ways of thinking and speaking identities.

A postmodern understanding offers different ways of seeing identities as multiple, complex, discursively produced and changing over time. The discursive construction of identities is considered to be fluid, rather than fixed (Foucault, 1981). Instead of a singular and fixed identity, Foucault considers that a person wears multiple masks and performs identities in diverse and complex ways. The performance of a particular way of being reflects only one of these identities. When one mask is removed, rather than the discovery of the true or real identity, there are always other masks, other identities, shaped and maintained by discursive practices. A poststructuralist account looks to identities as multiple and discursively produced, so that “it is not about a true essence, there is no self waiting to be discovered, but rather a process of creation and reinvention out of available resources” (Osgood, 2010, p. 16).

Early childhood teacher identities are produced through any number of discourses that are accessible and in play, subject to contingencies. Existing studies have looked closely at some of the ways in which discourses produce early childhood teacher professional identities (see for example, Moss, 2006; Krieg, 2008, 2010; Osgood, 2006, 2012; Langford, 2005, 2007; Thomas, 2009; Whitebook & Ryan, 2011). Emerging studies such as Warren (2013) link discursive production of identities with the complexities of the nature of work in early childhood. Attention has also been given to discourses of gender, maternalism, care and developmentalism (Langford, 2005; Moss, 2006; Osgood, 2012). Others, such as Colley (2006) and Page (2011) pay particular attention to discourses around care and maternalism. Pay, conditions, qualification requirements and teacher preparation have also come under

scrutiny (Krieg, 2008; Langford, 2005; Whitebook & Ryan, 2011) as factors that play some part in the production of early childhood teacher identities.

Identities and theories on identity formation are further explained in Chapter 3 in relation to the theoretical framework for this research. What follows in this final section of the literature review are three examples of the ways in which discourses come together to constitute professional identities of early childhood teachers. A map of three examples of different types of early childhood teacher identities will open possibilities to consider identities, and how they are shaped and reshaped at particular points in time.

2.4.1 The *good* early childhood teacher

One prominent early childhood teacher identity is that of the *good* early childhood teacher. The identity of a good early childhood practitioner has been shaped in part by practices that are read in key early childhood texts (Langford, 2005, 2007). For example, the discourse of DAP purported as the way to interact and teach young children, is outlined in a text of the same name, which is now in its third edition (Bredekamp & Copple, 2009). With a stated aim of providing children with “optimal learning and development” the text outlines examples of developmentally appropriate practices. One example of an appropriate practice is to “create a caring community of learners” (Bredekamp & Copple, 2009, p. 17) in which “teachers listen to and acknowledge children’s feelings and frustrations”. Not included in the DAP text, but possibly a viable alternative, might be to encourage children’s resilience and monitoring of their feelings. Is an early childhood teacher *inappropriate*, or even *bad*, if they do not adhere to the examples from the text? Lists of what to do and what not to do produce regimes of truth, which are sets of regulated practices underpinned by a prescribed framework that draws predominantly on child development theory. The DAP guidelines have enjoyed wide ranging adoption and implementation across a range of settings and contexts and are acknowledged as hegemonic in early childhood programs internationally (Cannella, 1997; Ryan & Grieshaber, 2005). This is not to suggest that an inappropriate or bad teacher is the antithesis of the appropriate practice. Rather, the point here is the power of the discourse of DAP to produce a good and acceptable early childhood teacher.

An acceptable early childhood teacher represents an ideal, which might present a goal to strive for, or might constitute what Walkerdine (1992) refers to as an “impossible fiction” (p. 19). In the process of normalising the early childhood professional, discourses create a truth in which “something real is produced out of fiction” (Walkerdine, 1993, p. 454). The impossible fiction is the good, acceptable, early childhood teacher, whose practices are developmentally appropriate, and who makes decisions informed by child development knowledge. To re-think teacher identities, beyond a good teacher reflecting the DAP rules of good practice, provides possibilities for multiple ways of being an early childhood practitioner.

2.4.2 The advocate-activist early childhood teacher: beyond being good

Another possible identity available to early childhood teachers that is featured in the literature is the advocate-activist early childhood teacher. Although still attached to the DAP child-development discourse, this identity is a shift from the good early childhood teacher identity and enables other possibilities of being an early childhood practitioner. In contrast to a good and developmentally appropriate teacher with an emphasis on compliance, the advocacy discourse calls for teachers to “speak on behalf of others” (Sumsion, 2006, p. 3) and become active in bringing about change in the field. These changes are often about rights and may focus on children, families or teachers themselves. An advocate focuses on a goal of what “needs fixing” and sets about to make this happen. In comparison, an activist requires practitioners to resist and challenge frames of reference and “underpinning assumptions” (Sumsion, 2006, p. 3). For example, an advocate for quality in child care may focus on the National Quality Standards and the associated measures to ensure quality. An activist for quality in child care may look further at issues of equity, access and ethics, and in doing so, may focus on the power that shapes the quality measurement tools.

The advocate-activist identity sits uncomfortably with the ways in which DAP positions early childhood practitioners (Grieshaber, 2000). Within the advocacy-activism discourse, early childhood practitioners are positioned as risk takers, willing to engage in conflict and critique of the DAP-construction of “good” teacher. Sumsion (2006) draws on this discourse as she encourages early childhood teachers to become ethically and politically aware and take up the baton of activism. The activist identity opens different possibilities for the future and, in doing so, paves the

way to challenge power that resides with some individual groups (Sachs, 2003). For example, in Australia, the domination in early childhood by for-profit/private and corporate child care has seen power located within such organisations. As an example, their influence has been visible in policy documents, quality standards and notably, a review of industrial awards in a pay equity case (see, for example, QIRC, 2000). Resistance to this power has seen community-based child care organisations that are vocal in lobbying for higher salaries and better conditions to be reflected in industrial awards (see, for example, Independent Education Union ACT/NSW, 2012).

2.4.3 The entrepreneurial early childhood teacher

A third possible identity that appears in the literature, and is available to early childhood teachers, is the “entrepreneurial” identity (Sachs, 2003). This identity positions teachers within a framework of accountability and practices derived from the corporate world. This notion of “corporatising the teacher” (McWilliam et al., 1999, p. 7) is underpinned by marketisation and provides the “corporate professional” with all of the regalia of an enterprising culture. An entrepreneurial identity positions teachers as efficient, responsible and accountable (Sachs, 2003), and this works to produce compliance, underpinned by working in a technocratic way (MacNaughton, 2005).

The identities that have been included here are three of many possible identities available to early childhood teachers that feature in the literature. Each creates possibilities for early childhood professional teacher identities.

2.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has examined some of the “expert talk” (Fraser, 1989) that contributes to understandings of early childhood teachers’ professional identities. Four nodal points in the literature have been examined: early childhood, professionalism, preservice teacher education and identities. The first and most substantial nodal point of the literature review constructed a map of early childhood. The complexities of early childhood were examined, with attention to education and care, children and teachers/workforce. The origins of child care and preschool as two early childhood contexts were considered, along with recent shifts in policy. Discourses of investment in early childhood and neuroscience were located as key in

the literature and attention was afforded to each. Images of children and childhood were mapped, and approaches to pedagogy examined. Quality in early childhood was located as another key discourse in the literature and was closely considered. Early childhood qualifications, courses and programs, position titles, pay and conditions were each examined.

The second nodal point of the literature review examined professionalism, including a genealogy of the professional and issues pertaining to the intersections between early childhood and professionalism. The third nodal point explored the nature of preservice teacher education and drew on literature that proposes innovative approaches to course design and teaching. The final nodal point of the literature review turned to identities, with attention given to identity theories and particular constructions of early childhood teacher professional identities. The process of mapping the literature around the four nodal points of early childhood, professionalism, preservice teacher education and identities highlights the need to further explore diverse ways of understanding early childhood teacher professional identities.

Given the policy shifts in the early years in Australia and emerging research on early childhood teachers' professional identities, this thesis will make a significant contribution. In a time of significant reform, the effects and outcomes of changes to policy, curriculum, qualifications and regulatory requirements cannot be considered, without taking into account the flow-on effects connected with the professional identities of those who are charged with enacting the changes. This study aims to build on current understandings particularly in child care, about how work in child care is linked with issues of professional identity.

The following chapter, Chapter 3, explains the theoretical framework for this research. Poststructuralism is explored, along with Foucault's work on discourse, resistance, rules and theoretical perspectives on identities. These theories provide a framework for this inquiry's examination of early childhood teacher professional identities.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

Chapter 3 maps the theoretical framework that was used to view the research problem and orient the study. This chapter builds on Chapter 2, which provided a map of the relevant literature based on the research focus on the production and maintenance of early childhood teachers' professional identities. The discussion in Chapter 2 about some of the critical discourses was organised under four interconnected nodal points: early childhood, professionalism, preservice teacher education and identities.

Chapter 3 continues to address the research sub-questions and looks to: What theoretical understandings would enable new ways of thinking about early childhood teachers' professional identities? (see Chapter 1, Section 1.2). The chapter is divided into four main sections that focus on poststructuralism, discourse, identities and category maintenance. The first section contains an overview of poststructuralism and its application to my research. To investigate how early childhood teachers' professional identities are produced, I looked for a framework that would sit comfortably with my ontological viewpoint, as well as my epistemological position on how knowledge is acquired. With this in mind, I positioned my study on identities within a poststructuralist paradigm. This orientation provided possibilities to consider identities as fluid and as produced through what is happening in a particular time and place, rather than being rigid and fixed. This overview includes Foucault's poststructuralist theoretical works on discourse, power/knowledge, truth and resistance (Foucault, 1980a, 1981, 1982, 1984a, 1984b, 1990a, 1990b). Each of these four aspects of Foucault's work is discussed, with attention to their applicability to identities; although each is considered separately, all four are interconnected. Power, for example, cannot be separated from truths that enable discourses to be sayable/unsayable, and so on. This leads into a discussion on identities, in which Foucault's work coalesces with particular poststructuralist feminist theorists (Davies, 1993, 2004/2006; McNay, 1992; Osgood, 2006, 2012; Walkerdine, 1990, 1992; Weedon, 1997, 1999). Ideas related to gender and identities (Davies & Harre, 1990; Walkerdine, 1990; Weedon, 1997) and investment (McNay, 1992) are scrutinised to explore the discursive construction of identities of early childhood teachers. The use

of the hologram (Webb, 2009), nomadic identities (Braidotti, 1994), the cyborg (Haraway, 1991) and performativity (Butler, 1997, 2008, 2011) are also considered. Additionally, the ways in which identities are formed in relation to self and other were examined; this discussion draws heavily on Davies' (2004/2006) work on category maintenance.

Figure 3.1 provides a visual representation of the main theories that underpin this study. Foucault's work on discourse is interconnected with the work other key theorists have done on identities.

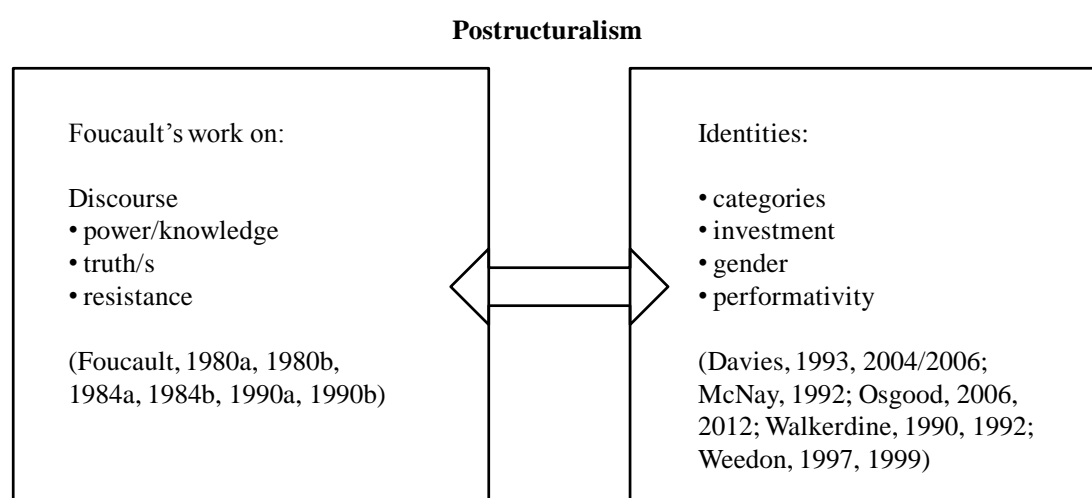


Figure 3.1. Theoretical framework for study.

The remainder of this chapter outlines how these theoretical frames are drawn together to form a conceptual architecture for the research, with particular attention on the production of early childhood teacher professional identities.

3.1 POSTSTRUCTURALISM

Poststructuralist theory problematises research inquiry through identifying contingencies, uncertainties and complexities. By acknowledging uncertainties, it becomes possible to think differently. This “thinking otherwise” (Ball, 1998, p. 81) allows for alternative views. Poststructuralism resists truths, and rigid, fixed boundaries; it focuses on complexity and deliberate attempts to see problems in new and different ways. As a result, subtleties, nuances and surprises emerge that may have been overlooked or discounted in other neater approaches to research. Using a poststructuralist viewpoint, the world is complex and interdependent discourses produce both *moments in time* and people's identities. Two examples of moments in

time that produced early childhood teachers' identities were the emergence of State Preschool in Queensland in 1973 (Ailwood, 2008a) and the abolition of Commonwealth Government funding to community-based child care in 1996 (Press, 2009). In the field of early childhood, it seems reasonable to suggest that teachers' professional identities are produced through the intersection of such specific events.

Poststructuralism provides for multiplicities in research (Alvesson, 2002; Foucault, 1980a; MacNaughton, 2005). It is "not a monolithic theory with a rigid and uniform set of assumptions" (Sondergaard, 2005, p. 6), nor is it a "single theoretical framework" (Baxter, 2002, p. 8). Poststructuralism is diverse and complex, and has been described as "antiparadigm" (Luke & McArdle, 2009, p. 17). It has been applied as a framework to deconstruct other theoretical paradigms—for example, Walkerdine (1993) applied a poststructuralist lens to deconstruct traditional developmental theory (discussed in Chapter 2). At the same time, however, it is not an "anything goes" (Baxter, 2002, p. 8) approach to research. It *does* require a researchers to look beyond singular ways to view a research problem. This opens possibilities to think differently about identities and consider them as multiple.

Despite its celebration of multiplicities and contingencies, there are "common principles" within poststructuralism that render it a "theoretical discourse in its own right" (Baxter, 2002, p. 8). It is an orientation to research that calls for a suspension of a quest for a truth. There is a "lack of closure" and this opens up "an appreciation of diversity and richness of its competing perspectives" (Baxter, 2002, p. 17). In their research into early childhood teaching, Ryan, Ochsner and Genishi (2001) highlight that a poststructuralist framework "creates more complex images of early childhood teachers and teaching" (p. 55). In a resistance to "either/or dualisms used to limit categorizations of early childhood teachers" (Ryan et al., 2001, p. 55), there is a resistance to unitary ways of being an early childhood teacher. Thus, as a theoretical framework, poststructuralism creates more problems to explore in relation to professional identities of early childhood teachers, rather than seeking to find answers.

There are particular threads of poststructuralism that are most relevant for my focus on identities; these are mapped to provide an orientation to my research. First, poststructuralism resists truths and looks to multiple possibilities that may provide insights into a research problem. In resisting a truth, or singular answer, a

poststructuralist approach to research opens up to new and different ways of understanding early childhood teacher professional identities. This allows ways of being that may not have been considered before. Second, there is no one fixed identity, no correct identity, and no one way to be. Identities are considered as multiple, diverse and always emerging. Poststructuralism unsettles notions of what it may mean to be an early childhood teacher. Thus, it provides a lens through which to explore identities as constituted through a web of interconnected ways of being, rather than a set of identities that a person is located within. Third, identities are constructed or produced through discourses that are at play at particular points in time. This opens further possibilities to view early childhood teacher professional identities as multiple, diverse and always emerging. Consider an endless hall of mirrors, where there are infinite images created that stretch further than the eye can see. Similarly, when viewed through a poststructuralist framework, identities are multiple and have infinite possibilities. An early childhood teacher might be simultaneously an educator, a carer and an administrator.

In this study, poststructuralism provided scope for unsettling the constitution of identities. The data was examined for the complexities and contradictions, and this process was embraced as one in which opportunities were provided for seeing situations from multiple perspectives (Grieshaber & Cannella, 2001a; Hatch, 2002; Weedon, 1997, 1999). By deliberately resisting neat findings and binaries, this theoretical framework enabled different possibilities for ways of being an early childhood teacher. It provided room for subtleties and silences that may have been overlooked with the adoption of modernist paradigms, and as a result, new questions and new possibilities were created. In this sense, poststructuralist research becomes part of an ongoing conversation about early childhood teacher professional identities.

3.2 DISCOURSE

Through his work on discourse, Foucault provides insights into the constitution of identities (Foucault, 1980a, 1981, 1982; O'Farrell, 2005). Foucault's theories of discourse and discursive practice allow for multiple ways of being, and enable ways of thinking and speaking about different identities. Discourse and discursive practices, construction and formations are central to this study, and each warrants expansion. First, discourse in a Foucauldian sense (1972/1989) is "the general domain of all statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a

number of statements” (p. 80). In particular discourses, statements come together in ways that are predictable, with depth, substance and consistency. At the same time, Foucault insists on the complexities and uncertainties within discourse and maintains that at any time, there are a number of discourses in play (Foucault, 1972/1989). Discourses intersect and collide to shape early childhood teacher professional identities. Examples of discourses currently at play might be outcomes-based education (Reid, 2009), professionalism (Sachs, 2001; Yinger, 2005), corporatisation (McWilliam et al., 1999) and motherhood (Ailwood, 2008b; Moss, 2006; Osgood, 2012). This study was an inquiry into how such discourses work together to produce teacher identities at particular points in time. Foucault’s exploration of discourse shifted over the duration of his work. Central to these shifts, or developments, was *how* discourses constitute the subject (as the entity or person): “Is the subject simply an effect of discourse or does the exclusion of the subject from discourse disclose the constitutive possibilities of agency?” (Caldwell, 2007, pp. 771–772).

In Foucault’s earlier archaeology-focused works (Foucault, 1972/1989), discourse appeared as “primarily structured, grouped and regulated by systems of rules which state who can say what, where and how” (Caldwell, 2007, p. 772). Discourse worked to define the conditions that make it possible for the production of identities. These conditions are also hidden rules that the subject takes up to “intentionally act” (p. 772) themselves into being. In this archaeological work, discourse determines the subject. According to this way of thinking about discourse and discursive production, an early childhood teacher’s identities are produced through the current discourses that are at play. For example, the new *Early Years Learning Framework* (EYLF) (DEEWR, 2009a) includes a focus on “play” and “intentional teaching”. These discourses produce the work of the early childhood teacher. For example, under these discursive conditions, it would not be considered *permissible* for teachers of kindergarten children to focus on worksheets and structured learning, but these methods would be permissible for children who are one year older and attending school. The new National Australian Curriculum (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA], 2012) calls for particular knowledge acquisition and sets out prescriptive requirements for what a child should learn in each year of education. In response, teachers use worksheets, phonics activities and take-home readers to ensure that these requirements are met.

The shift in discourse, from “play” (DEEWR, 2009a) to “knowledge, skills and understanding” (ACARA, 2012, p. 1), works to legitimise the practices that are permissible. The identities of the early childhood teachers are regulated and determined, at least partially, by the curriculum documents that work to provide the rules.

Later in his genealogical work, Foucault (1972/1989) developed a theory of discourse that was more than “simply independent or free-floating rules regulating systems of statements defining what a particular subject can say about an object” (Caldwell, 2007, p. 772). Through genealogical work, Foucault saw discourse as the “practices, which form the objects of which they speak” (Foucault, 1972/1989, p. 49). In the book chapter “Politics and the study of discourse” (Foucault, 1991, pp. 59–60), Foucault speaks of discourse as “the set of rules which at a given period and for a given society define: the limits and forms of the *sayable*. What is it possible to speak of?” (p. 59, original italics). The regulatory nature of discourses render what is sayable and unsayable, and thereby, constitute professional identities. A key modification to the theory of discourse is, thus, the notion of agency.

Agency, or the subject’s capacity to make choices about which discourses are fabricated into her identities, is central to this study. In the constitution of identities, the subject *becomes* through the process of discourses that are in circulation acting on her; at the same time, she is making choices about the discourses that she will take up. In this thesis, discourses are understood as acting on the subject as they make up her identities and are acted on by the subject as she chooses which discourses to adopt and which to resist. However, the focus on agency is not to suggest that the subject is in control of discourses that work to produce her identities. The complexity of this reflects the interconnected possibilities of discourses that work to produce the identities of the subject in different ways and at different points in time, depending on the discursive conditions. For example, the professional identity of an early childhood teacher in child care may be produced through discourses at play. Discourses of care, education, corporatisation and managerialism may act on, and are enacted by, the teacher in child care as she is positioned by and through the intersections of the discourses.

Discourses work together at historical points, and as discourses compete and collide, the intersections produce subjects. Foucault refers to this production as a

“discursive formation” (Foucault, 1972/1989, pp. 31–39). A discursive construction “defines what is understood and how” (Walkerline, 1993, p. 454). For example, in *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (Khalifa, 2006), Foucault considers the discursive construction of mental illness. He traces the emergence of the concept of madness through different historical periods (including the Renaissance and the Classical Age), then focuses on the “modern time” or present. The state of madness and the incarceration of people in asylums were linked to the social conditions or what was happening at the time. For example, the medical profession was looking for answers, many families were no longer able to look after mentally ill relatives, and many people were afraid of those who were different, and therefore, preferred them to be imprisoned. An awareness of these social conditions provides a sense of how it was possible for the discursive construction of madness to emerge and for asylums to become places where people who were mad were housed. At other times in history, and in other places, people exhibiting similar behaviour remained part of the community.

3.2.1 Interconnected discourses

Discourses are connected and are positioned in relation to one another; each discourse is “part of a discursive complex” in which “it is locked in an intricate web of practices ...” (Henriques, Hollway, Urwin, Venn, & Walkerline, 1984, pp. 105–106). Through interweaved overlaps and collisions, discourses work together to produce identities. Foucault was interested in the relationship between discourses: “... there is nothing to be gained from describing this autonomous layer of discourses unless one can relate it to other layers, practices, institutions, social relations, political relations, and so on” (Foucault, 1972/1989, p. 162).

The intersections between discourses provide points at which discursive practices connect, and at times, collide with each other. As a result, discourses work interdependently to produce identities. The identities of early childhood teachers are produced, at least partially, through the discourses in circulation. For example, the shifting landscape of early childhood (examined in Chapter 2, see Section 2.1.1) has seen a call for education and care to be brought together. With this comes an initiative for university-qualified teachers to work in before-school contexts, including child care. This warrants consideration of the discourses that have produced this terrain and worked to constitute the professional identities of early

childhood teachers, as the “current episodes in a series of subjugations” (Foucault, 1984a, p. 83). This thesis considers which discourses are at play in the current terrain in early childhood and locates the associated “layers, practices, institutions, social relations and political relations” (p. 83). Thus, it is anticipated that this study will go some way to mapping the interdependent discursive practices that constitute early childhood teacher professional identities.

3.2.2 Time/history-dominant discourses

Discursive practices are contextually specific and particular to time, space and cultural setting (Foucault, 1972/1989). A system of discourse can be examined once it has occurred, and discourses provide archives (Foucault, 1972/1989), leaving historical traces that act as indicators of the discursive boundaries of that time. These historical and verbal traces provide a basis that can be used to consider the present discursive practices. Understanding how discourses work together at different moments provides an important platform from which to consider the constitution of identities. Through an awareness of discourse, the conditions that exist at a point in time allow “historically specific practices produced in the history of the domination over Others” (Walkerdine, 1993, p. 456). The connectedness between discourses and their time and place means that a historical event is contingent. That is, the “emergence of that event was not necessary, but was one *possible* result of a whole series of complex relations” (Kendall & Wickham, 1999, p. 5, emphasis added). The discursive conditions make possible the emergence of a situation, or the subject. The emergence of the NQF (COAG, 2008; DEEWR, 2012) in Australia has come at a time when there is increased attention on the importance of the early childhood years, service quality, measurement of quality, public accountability for funding, and increased rates of child care usage. Through complex relations, these discourses work together to produce the conditions that make possible the NQF. At the same time, these discursive conditions work to produce early childhood teacher identities through a call for regulatory compliance and an increased awareness of particular elements of quality, including qualifications. Within this framework, discourses intersect to render qualifications discursively powerful, and in turn, the qualification requirements regulate and shape the identities of early childhood teachers.

An examination of discourses that produce something into being at a point in time leads to an examination of “more than words” (Walkerdine, 1993, p. 456), and

more than the semantics and structure of language. For example, when looking at the discourses that work to produce child care, it is necessary to investigate why some discourses are rendered more important than others “within particular historical and spatial contexts” (Moss, 2005, p. 408). This approach can be applied to an example from Australia during the 1990s. At this time, there was an exponential growth in corporate child care, which is traceable to the discursive conditions of the time. The demand for child care places increased largely because of increased parental workforce participation (ABS, 2011a, 2011b). There was a need for more child care places, and at the same time, changes to government funding arrangements for child care broadened the options available to for-profit/private and corporate child care providers to have access to the same levels of funding as not-for-profit community-based providers (Brennan, 2007; Press, 2009). This creation of the so-called level playing field resonated with the liberal democratic principles of access and inclusion. As a result, there was an rapid increase in the number of corporate child care providers; the number of community-based centres dwindled, partly because of the abolition of supply-side funding for child care (Press, 2009) (see Chapter 2, Section 2.1.1). A complex interplay of discourses—including, for example, government elections, economic conditions and workforce participation—produced that situation at that time.

Particular discourses become dominant, gain momentum, become accepted, and are taken for granted. These dominant discourses speak subjects, actions and practices into existence. Dominant discourses are so powerful that there is not a conscious awareness of their being. For example, in early childhood education, child development has been a linchpin of understanding children and families (see discussion in Chapter 2, Section 2.1.2). It would be unusual to come across an early childhood teacher preparation program in which child development theory was not given a full profile as a fundamental way of understanding children. Rachel Langford’s work on the “good early childhood teacher” mapped the prevalence of discourses in preservice teacher textbooks, and she found that child development featured predominantly (see Chapter 2, Section 2.1.2). The discourse of child development pervades constructions of children, childhood and work in the early childhood field (Burman, 1994, 2001; Grieshaber, 2008; Langford, 2005; Lubeck, 1998a, 1998b; Ryan & Grieshaber, 2005). In my thesis, I explore dominant

discourses in a key political document and early childhood preservice teachers' talk to help me to think "otherwise" (Ball, 1998, p. 81) about the production of the professional identities of early childhood teachers.

3.2.3 Power/knowledge

Foucault considers discourse to be the location where power and knowledge intersect (Foucault, 1990b). This intersection produces a "complex relationship" (O'Farrell, 2005) between power and knowledge. Power and knowledge are not the same and neither one produces the other; however, the intersection between them works as a space where different types of power produce different types of knowledge. How knowledge is constituted through the intersection of discursive practices requires consideration in this thesis.

Power works to (re)produce discourses; it is both a discourse *and* located within discourses. It can be traced to dominant discourses as "those points where it becomes capillary" (Foucault, 1980b, p. 96), where "those discourses metastasise" (Graham, 2007, p. 202) into other areas. This spreading out of discourses is made possible because of the power/knowledge relationships that exist. Power is located "everywhere" because it "'circulates' or flows through the entire 'social body' by a multiplicity of mechanisms and archipelagos of localized power relations" (Caldwell, 2007, p. 775).

The subject, and her identities, is constituted through power/knowledge relations, and she is also able to exercise choice in the discourses that are embodied and adopted. Professional identities are (re)shaped by the discursive conditions that prevail and are "discursively constructed within power/knowledge relations" (Walkerdine, 1993, p. 452). Discourses become more or less powerful at different points in time, dependent on the conditions. Power, in this sense, has the capacity to (re)produce or "do something" to the subject. Additionally, the subject has the capacity to do to others: "If I feel the truth about myself it is in part that I am constituted as a subject across a number of power relations which are exercised over me and which I exercise over others" (Foucault, 1988a, p. 39). Power works as a mechanism to control and order the subject to be and behave in a particular way. The identities shift and emerge, depending on the power/knowledge discourses that are in circulation, and come together in different ways, at different moments.

When taken-for-granted beliefs and assumptions are examined critically, it is possible to understand how knowledge and power shape experience. Power is understood as both repressive, and at the same time, productive. Discourses are concerned with “productive” power relations and “construct what it is possible to think” (Fendler, 2003, p. 21). In early childhood, dominant discourses work to produce particular ways of thinking about child care and about work in child care. Walkerdine (1990) asserts that people, as subjects, are produced by a framework into relations of power: “An individual can become powerful and powerless depending on the terms in which his/her subjectivity is constituted” (p. 5). The discourses of child development, education and care, as just three examples, become powerful in the ways through which they connect and align to constitute identities in early childhood.

One example of a discourse in which power/knowledge resides is in traditional child development theory. Developmentalism has been the subject of critique (Burman, 2001; Cannella, 1997; Ryan & Grieshaber, 2005; O’Loughlin, 2009; Walkerdine, 1993) that has located the power that resides in the “science” of child development theory. Foucault viewed “science” as the “ultimate form of rational thought” (O’Farrell, n.d.). In order for knowledge to become valued “it had to constantly strive to be ‘scientific’” (O’Farrell, n.d.). Science, through this lens, is a discourse with a knowledge/power relationship. Science works to add value and truth, and as “rational thought”, it is difficult to refute; it becomes difficult to question science as the rational thought and logic that underpins it is “irrefutable”. In this quest to know, to seek a truth, science provides “seductive” answers, which are quantifiable and acceptable. Science, as a power/knowledge discourse, works to (re)shape identities through rendering work important and valued, only if it is scientific.

The concept of “scientificity” seeks to determine “what makes a science a science” (Lather, 2006, p. 783). How is it that a discourse is constituted as a truth? What regimes of truth operate to render it irrefutable, and in so doing, assign power/knowledge? In early childhood, recent enthusiasm for neuroscience and brain research (Lally, 1998; Mustard, 2002) has provided compelling evidence for an increased focus on early childhood service provision. Concurrently, the economic argument to invest in the early years (Heckman, 2004, 2006) fits well with the call for better funding in early childhood programs. The scientific research has provided a

case for investment in early childhood programs that is reflected in Australia in the political document *New Directions for Early Childhood Education: Universal access to early learning for 4 year olds* (Rudd & Macklin, 2007b). This document was purposefully selected for examination in this thesis (see Chapter 4, Section 4.6, for fuller explanation and Chapter 5 for the analysis of this data set).

The power relations that produce the professional identities of early childhood teachers is approached in this thesis from “the methods and techniques used in different institutional contexts to act upon the behaviour of individuals taken separately or in a group” (Florence, 1994, p. 463). As early childhood teachers “modify their way of conducting themselves” (p. 463), they adopt and/or resist discourses that produce professional identities. The ways in which these power relations intersect “characterize the manner” by which they are “‘governed’ by one another” (p. 463). As an example, it has been suggested that psychology can be understood “in terms of the historical circumstances in which the knowledge is generated” (Walkerdine, 1993, p. 452). As a discourse, psychology emerged through a series of discursive conditions that called for particular knowledge about human development. Psychology acts as a tool through which to understand and come to predict how people might react to a situation, and how to treat them to normalise their behaviour. First developed for the military, psychology is a means of scientifically measuring people and is a context in which power/knowledge intersects to produce the subject. In child development, ages and stages work to assign predictable developmental trajectories for children as they reach key milestones in an otherwise complex field of growth and development.

The location of discourses, their dominance, their connectivity, knowledge/power, and their regulatory power as a regime of truth can be located by using the answers to particular questions. For example, Foucault asks:

who is speaking, are they qualified to speak, at what level is the statement situated, what set can it be filled into, and how and to what extent does it conform to other forms and other typologies of knowledge? (Foucault, 1990a, p. 102)

Based on these interests, other questions about whose knowledge is being reproduced, and why, become important.

For early childhood teachers, it is possible that power/knowledge produces what appears as a truth—an unquestionable fact that is dominant in its capacity to construct identities. These truths circulate, just as power/knowledge circulates and produces dominant ways of thinking, acting and being an early childhood teacher.

3.2.4 Truth and regimes of truth

Dominant discourses override other possibilities through a set of discursive rules that govern what can be said, done and thought. They “induce[s] effects of power” (Foucault, 1980a, p. 131), so that dominant ways of thinking and being work to produce particular ways of speaking and being an early childhood teacher. A truth is relevant to the time and place in which it is produced. As a “thing of this world” (Foucault, 1980a, p. 131), it is unique to the discursive constructions that enable it to be so. So-called truths are constructed through the “historically specific mechanisms” (O’Farrell, n.d.) that produce discourses to “function as true in particular times and places” (O’Farrell, n.d.). What might be a truth at one point in time may not be produced in the same way at another time because the conditions that produced that truth would have changed. For example, what we now understand as schizophrenia was once considered the work of the devil (Khalfa, 2006).

The circulatory nature of truth and dominant discourses reflects discursive practices at points in time:

“Truth” is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extend it.
(Foucault, 1980a, pp. 131–132)

In education, there have been specific approaches that have emerged at certain times, then emerged again some years later. Standardised testing is an example of a practice within education that was seen as a means of measuring a truth about student performance and teaching effectiveness. This practice was prevalent in the 1950s, and more recently, has re-emerged as a way to look at accountability and provide a measure or truth about children and teaching. This discursive practice works to shape the identities of teachers who are required to work within these conditions.

Power/knowledge discourses generate truth/s, and “the rules delimit the sayable” (Henriques et al., 1984, pp. 105–106). The application of the rules is not always neat, and the conditions, such as the interplay of discourses that produce

possibilities for identities, are messy and slippery. Foucault uses the phrase “regimes of truth” (Foucault, 1980a, p. 109) to refer to the rules that govern what is said and how is it said. Regimes of truth work to regulate practices and constitute identities. Discourses that intersect and collide to produce a way of speaking or a way of being are also called “games of truth” (Foucault, 1990b, p. 9). These games of truth govern what is sayable/unsayable or permissible/not permissible. Identities form and identities re-form according to the games of truth. The discursive rules allow certain identities and disallow others.

Discourses produce rules and truths, and these become absorbed into speech, unquestioned, as though they have always been there. When discourses gain this type of momentum, they produce truths that are seemingly irrefutable and taken for granted. The effect of these truths is that “something real is produced out of fiction” (Walkerdine, 1993, p. 454). For example, Moss argues that the concept and practice of quality is “part of a regime of truth or dominant discourse” (2005, p. 406). Quality is produced as a regime of truth that shifts, depending on the discursive rules. A focus on measurability and quantifying quality resists the complexity and contingencies that produce quality in different ways (Dahlberg et al., 2007; Penn, 2011b; Tobin, 2005) according to the discourses that are in circulation. As a regime of truth, quality is one of the discourses that shapes professional identities of early childhood teachers in different ways at different points in time. For example, a focus on quality standards in child care is a regulatory framework that is a “double-edged sword” (Fenech et al., 2006). Although there are benefits, at the same time, there are “unintended outcomes” (p. 49). Thus, as a regime of truth, quality both enables and constrains (McWilliam, 1994) the professional identities of early childhood teachers.

Dominant discourses produce truths that are kept in circulation while keeping others out. These discourses have the effect of limiting and constraining what is sayable:

A dominant discourse serves to inhibit and foreclose the possibilities for an interplay of multiple voices, perspectives and narratives representing the interests and values of diverse groups. (Baxter, 2002, p. 8)

Dominant discourses work to silence and “exclude alternative ways of understanding and speaking about the world” (Moss, 2005, p. 406). These silences become marginalised spaces while the dominant assumptions remain unchallenged. From

these embedded discourses, there is capacity, and the risk, to “... turn subjective perspectives and understandings into apparently objective truths” (Moss, 2005, p. 406). In other words, contingencies become obsolete as truths emerge and dominant ways of thinking become normalised and standard. An example of a discourse that has continued to pervade early childhood is maternalism (Osgood, 2012), in which the work of an early childhood teacher is likened to “a natural mothering instinct” (Ailwood, 2008b, p. 162). It is not possible to think of an early childhood teacher who is not maternal and who cannot demonstrate “soft skills” (Hatcher, 2008, p. 153) such as love, care, nurturance and compassion.

3.2.5 Resistance and normalisation

Resistance is a form of reacting against power/knowledge (Foucault, 1980a) and questioning the rules or conditions. Foucault (1990a) argues:

We must make allowance for the complex and unstable processes whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it. (pp. 100–101)

Power always creates points of resistance at the same time as producing dominant discourses that produce discursive rules. When these rules, as taken-for-granted assumptions, are brought into question, resistance becomes possible. When there is an awareness of the discursive rules or boundaries that work to normalise, there are possibilities to resist the “pervading and normalising” (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005, p. 27) factors that discursively produce a construct such as early childhood. When these rules are transgressed, possibilities are opened for breaking the rules, and as a result, spaces for new, different and other identities are created.

By contrast, when discursive constructions are not questioned and are taken for granted, regimes of truth act as ways to normalise (Foucault, 1990b). With these normalisations come inherent assumptions about ways of understanding and being an early childhood teacher. Normalisations as regimes of truth propose particular ways to *be* and to *perform* identities. It has been argued that “certain cultural configurations of professional identity have seized a hegemonic hold” (Osgood, 2006, p. 5) and have worked to normalise the early childhood teacher.

In the constitution of identities, the intersection between discourses produces the subject. Professional identities of early childhood teachers are produced through the regimes of truth and the interactions between power and knowledge. At the same time as being acted on by discourses, individuals, through agency, can resist. Thus, at the intersection of power and knowledge, there are always possibilities for resistance.

3.3 IDENTITIES

Identities, in poststructuralist terms, are considered contingent, fluid, shifting and always emerging. By contrast, a modernist account may look to factors of temperament, personality and context to locate *who* a person is, with the assumption that there is a *real you* with a fixed identity that remains stable over time. There are various modernist tools that are used to classify and categorise people's personalities as a way of assigning them a particular type of identity. The Enneagram model (Palmer, 1998) uses answers that people give to a series of questions to position them within a quadrant of nine possible interconnected personality types. Similarly, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), purportedly inspired by the teachings of Carl Jung, involves a "psychometric questionnaire designed to measure psychological preferences" (Myers-Briggs Foundation, n.d.) to determine how people view the world and how they work, interact and live. For example, a person who is an *INFJ* has a preference for Introversion, Intuition, Feeling and Judgement. Again, once a categorisation is applied to an individual, it is considered to remain stable across time and context.

Yet, it is a "struggle to construct and sustain a stable identity" (Day, Kington, Stobart, & Sammons, 2006, p. 613) over time. Foucault was cautious about the term *identity* as it risked categorising a person into one way of being. Another way to conceptualise identities that is more consistent with Foucault's work is to think about identities as being in a constant state of becoming (Butler, 2005). Such a "fluidity of identity" (Osgood, 2010, p. 26) suggests a continually shifting set of conditions or discursive practices that produce identities.

Poststructuralist work emphasises the connection between "subjectification (the making of the subject) and subjectivity (the condition of being a subject)" (Walkerline, 1993, p. 462). The subject and her identities are produced through the discourses in circulation, which act as regimes of truth and are adopted or resisted

through the process of agency. Discourses are adopted and resisted through the “constitution of the subject” (Florence, 1994, p. 461) and the process of becoming. Because of the ever-emerging conditions, the subject’s identities are “constituted and reconstituted through discursive practices that they have access to” (Osgood, 2010, p. 25). These available discourses work to produce the condition of being the subject as the ways in which the identities are enacted and performed.

Discourses work to produce early childhood teacher professional identities by providing the rules and regimes of truth that make possible a way of being an early childhood professional at that moment. Identities “are always historically produced through a range of discursive practices” (Weedon, 1997, p. 146). Like Davies’ (1993) earlier inquiries into gender identities, this thesis investigates both “the possibility of speaking into existence different ways of being” (p. xi) and “the constitutive force of the discursive practices” (p. ix) that shape early childhood teacher professional identities. To consider identities as discursively produced enables us to think of multiple ways of being, knowing and performing the role of early childhood practitioner. This is not a matter of simply replacing one discourse with another. The production and maintenance of identities changes and shifts across a person’s life (Weedon, 1997).

A poststructuralist approach to the constitution of identities is made possible by considering some of the discursive practices that are circulating at the time. Central to this study is the process of viewing early childhood teachers as having two simultaneous states: they are powerless as discourses act on them and they are powerful in the choices they make about the discourses that they adopt. The notion of agency (discussed earlier in this chapter) in the constitution of identity is found in Foucault’s latter work, in which “technologies of self” (Foucault, 1988b, p. 18) are explored and “through which individuals actively fashion their own identities” (McNay, 1992, p. 3). This notion of becoming and re-becoming, or “we are not what we are; we are who we can become” (Caldwell, 2007, p. 782) is consistent with the notion of ever-evolving, discursively produced identities.

3.3.1 Further understandings of identities: holograms, nomadic identities and cyborgs

As discourses shift, new identities are continually produced. Haraway (1991, p. 154) posits that people “... are not afraid of permanently partial identities and

contradictory standpoints”. Yet she cautioned the naming of even one identity for the limits that this places on possibilities of being other identities. Holograms (Webb, 2009), nomadic identities (Braidotti, 1994) and cyborgs (Haraway, 1991) are useful concepts to employ when conceptualising the complexity of identities and the fact that they comprise multiple selves.

In the book *Teacher Assemblage*, Webb (2009) explores notions of teaching, and “accountability of policy-affected teachers”. The book opens with a science-fiction description of teaching holograms that look like teachers and “curiously ... also resemble them” (p. ix), but are not teachers. Webb considers what is seen, or what we see, and whether or not things are as they appear. A conceptualisation of identities as shifting, multiple and continually emerging reflects this way of thinking, in which there is no truth or one understanding of who we are. Foucault’s concepts of discourse, power and resistance are drawn on to consider “the ways identity can be represented and ultimately changed through repeated representations” (p. xi). When identities of early childhood teachers are spoken they are constituted through the discourses that are accessible. An inquiry into the ways in which the professional identities of early childhood teachers are produced can investigate the regimes of truth and the points of resistance.

A key part of being nomadic means that the subject (the person’s identities) is open to a process of change and transformation. In this sense, the identities are continually reinvented (Braidotti, 2003, p. 53). Braidotti’s (2003) nomadic identity provides understandings of identities as continually emerging, with the potential to change, and in doing so, bring attention to marginalisation through powerful discourses. A nomad moves between and within spaces and places, engaging in different ways, in different places and at different points in time. In addition, “... the nomadic subject signifies the potential becoming, the opening out, the transformative power of all the exploited, marginalized, oppressed minorities” (Braidotti, 2003, p. 52). This brings possibilities for a sense that there is a freedom, or liberation, but also illuminates the process of taking up discourses that are in circulation around the subject. In a poststructuralist account of identities, they are “not fixed but can be broken down and transgressed at many points” (McNay, 1992, p. 133), which allows a subject the possibility to become new, different to before, and to transform and re-

transform. With transformation, change and reform comes a rupturing of binaries or dualisms:

What is crucial to becoming nomad is undoing the oppositional dualism majority/minority and arousing an affirmative passion for and desire for the transformative flows that destabilize all identities. (Braidotti, 2003, p. 52)

The professional identities of early childhood teachers are transformed according to multiple discourses, not two opposing discourses. Through undoing seemingly opposing discourses, early childhood teacher professional identities are destabilised and produced through multiple, competing discourses.

In refusing one identity and cautioning against the use of identity categories, Haraway argues for “the pleasure in confusing identities” (1991, p. 149). This invites the subject to “cross [the] boundaries” where two seemingly opposing concepts are held together, in a state in which both are “necessary and both are true” (p. 149). For example, the cyborg is a way of bringing together the “hybrid of a machine and an organism” (Haraway, 1991, p. 149). The place of the subject having machine-like qualities, and at the same time being human, is to hold together these seemingly opposing ways of being, in tension, together.

The cyborg is a useful figure when thinking about identities as complex and non-linear. A cyborg provides “unsettling possibilities” (Haraway, 1988, p. 188) through the use of irony, and in doing so, “makes room for surprises” (p. 188). At the same time as encouraging play and humour through irony, Haraway encourages the rupture of dualisms that separate seemingly opposing discourses. For example, in early childhood, there has long been debate about whether child care is good or bad for children. Rather than look for a neat answer that provides rational thought and a scientifically irrefutable case, an approach that resists dualisms would demand the consideration of complexity, contradiction and ironies. There are other possibilities that emerge through resisting a quest for a truth and an answer. One example is a study of infants’ experiences in early childhood settings using a mosaic methodology (Sumsion & Goodfellow, 2012). The researchers in this study used a range of data, including time-use diaries, observations and very small cameras secured to babies’ heads that recorded images as they engaged with their environment. The aim of collecting this range of data was to provide different and new possibilities for insights into young children’s experiences in child care.

3.3.2 Gender and identities

Gender theory provides an explanation for why and how some professions are female-dominated. Davies (1993) has warned against seeing identity formation as a simple relationship between social and cultural contexts. Rather, the consideration of contradictory, dominant, alternative understandings provides other ways of thinking about gender (Davies, 1993). Thinking about the constitution of identities in a similar way opens possibilities for multiple ways of being an early childhood teacher.

Existing power structures are challenged and resisted by feminist and critical theories. Although these theories have different emphases, Hatch (2002) considers them to be within the same paradigm. These theories provide insight into how gender, class, race and culture contribute to the conceptualisation of the profession. McLaren (2003) adds: “Men and women are essentially unfree and inhabit a world rife with contradictions and asymmetries of power and privilege” (p. 69). Professional identities in early childhood are produced through the discourse of care that some believe comes through motherly instinct (Ailwood, 2008b). The discursive conditions intersect to render this work important in that it comes naturally to women.

Gender identities are constituted through power, knowledge and “regimes of truth” (Foucault, 1980a, p. 109). Hatcher (2003) argues that a “gendered truth” of being passionate plays an important part in regimes of truth generated in organisations. By reading texts to locate the “the centrality of gender”, it is possible to identify some of the discursive practices that inform the gendered truth and reconfirm “the traditional masculine/feminine hierarchy” (Hatcher, 2003, p. 391).

The production and re-production of gender identities and roles evokes powerful discursive practices that render the subject powerless in one sense, but although the discursive practices position the subject, the subject is also active in this process. Walkerdine (1990) suggests that female teachers are “not unitary subjects uniquely positioned, but are produced as a nexus of subjectivities, in relations of power, which are constantly shifting, rendering them at one moment powerful and the other powerless” (p. 3). A key point within Walkerdine’s exploration of discursive practice shaping gender is that “particular individuals are produced as subjects differently within a variety of discursive practices” (p. 5). How one is positioned as more powerful or less powerful is dependent on how the subject is

shaped by discursive practices and how he or she allows this effect to take place. The subject's agency produces discourses, including a "gendered truth" (Hatcher, 2003, p. 391) discourse, which both enables and constrains the performance of becoming and being a professional.

3.3.3 Performativity

The performative nature of gender is something that people enact or do, rather than something they are (Butler, 1990, 1997). Butler (2011) differentiates between "performance" and "performative". A gender performance, in the case of her research focus, is akin to acting or role-play or what we show to the world. Performativity produces a series of effects and works to rupture the notion of gender as a fact. Butler explains that performative gender is about acting, speaking, walking and talking in ways that consolidate the impression of being male or female. Butler (1997, 2008) contends that gender is culturally produced and reproduced, and the combination of institutional and informal powers keep the culturally produced discourse of gender in place. The norms of what it is to be gendered are established and policed, then become disrupted.

It is helpful for this inquiry into professional identities of early childhood teachers to think of an identity as a performance that is done at particular times and in particular ways (Butler, 1990; Osgood, 2006), depending on the various discourses at play. Consider the example of a teacher who works in a private school where there is a strict dress code that affects the performativity of being a teacher in that school. If the dress code and practice is for women to wear a skirt and jacket, this would affect the ways in which she was able to connect with and relate to people, especially children in her daily work. She may have to control her activities to suit the restricted movement of her skirt and avoid snagging her pantyhose and dirtying clothes that require dry cleaning. This is not to say that to be a teacher who can engage with children, one would need to wear, for example, trousers and no pantyhose. This understanding is not about a binary opposition—one or the other; rather, it illustrates how dress, as an example, shapes and reshapes the performativity of an identity and how identities that are taken up. Another example may come from an increasing trend to have a work uniform. This may be a skirt and jacket for a woman, though in early years contexts it is more common to have a polo shirt bearing the logo of the child care centre, school or employer. Again, these uniforms act as discursive

practices/formations that are produced by the intersections of discursive practices of performativity.

In contrast to the performance of *acting*, which is a deliberate effort of taking on a role, the performance of *being* becomes so strong that it is unconscious. This is not like a performance of acting, where it is a deliberate effort and strong awareness of taking on a role. Performativity is like an unaware performance (Robinson & Davies, 2008), shaped by culturally inscribed practices that are so dominant they are not questioned. The performativity becomes for others as they will make judgements about the appropriateness of the performance—whether or not it adheres to the culturally acceptable practices. The performativity becomes ways of speaking into existence or of constituting the identities of a person. Work on performativity (Butler, 1990, 1997, 2008, 2011) has been developed for gender in particular, though it can be drawn on to understand other ways of being. For example, an early childhood educator who works in child care adopts particular discourses for speaking, acting and embodying their work as performativity. In this case, performativity is not simply related to the institution of child care as a multitude of other interconnected discourses intersect and work together to produce identities.

Because performativity is about acting in particular ways without awareness, it becomes useful to locate some of the discourses that shape and culturally produce these behaviours. In my research, there are possibilities to look otherwise at early childhood teachers and how discourses work to produce their identities. Locating some of these discursive practices opens new ways to be an early childhood teacher, and provides scope for multiple ways of being, rather than a singular way to be, speak, think, act and perform as “an early childhood teacher”. Little ruptures and provocations become possible as discourses are made visible, and with this, an awareness of some of the discursive practices that shape the profession.

3.3.4 Investment in identities

Identities are actively positioned by, and through, discursive practices and involve investment and reward. McNay (1992, pp. 80–81) suggests that people may not always “invest in certain discursive positions” in a “conscious way”. The manner in which people position themselves within discourses and the particular “investment” they make (Holloway, 1984) is of interest here. The investment that a

person makes “in taking up certain positions in discourses” may result in “some satisfaction or pay off or reward” (Holloway, 1984, p. 238). This process demonstrates the sometimes contradictory ways in which people choose to perform their identities. For example, a woman may marry and choose to position herself as powerless within the marriage. However, she may make this choice based on her (discursive) understandings of what the institution of marriage enables her to be within the norms of social acceptability, lifestyle and status. In other words, to gain a reward, people may choose to be subordinate. In a further example from early childhood, a university-qualified teacher may choose to work in child care even though this workplace has a complex interplay of discursive conditions that work to produce her identity in particular ways. Poor pay and conditions have been cited as the primary reason that qualified teachers do not choose child care as a career option (Sumsion, 2002b, 2005; Whitebook & Sakai, 2003). One reading of an early childhood teacher in child care is that she is positioned as powerless through the poor conditions and other discourses, including the previously discussed notion of women’s work that anyone is able to do. At the same time, her position in child care renders her powerful through the qualification she holds and the position title/role that she fulfils. There is investment in choosing to work in child care. This choice signals a submission to power that is significant in the discursive shaping of identities. The early childhood teacher is acted on by discourses that produce child care, and at the same time, she acts on those discourses.

3.4 CATEGORY MAINTENANCE

The production of identities through discourses entails a speaking of *self* in relation to *other*. Using Davies’ (2004/2006) work on categories and category maintenance, it is possible to consider the ongoing emergence of identities that occurs as the subject adopts or resists discourses. The construction of identities through available discourses enables the subject to create categories and to maintain or rupture them. Category-maintenance work is not straightforward though, and Davies posits that it is:

... part of the hard work that individual subjects engage in to separate themselves out into the binary category to which they have been assigned ... the accomplishment of unequivocal membership to one [category] and not the other, and the simultaneous accomplishment of the “I” as this person and

not any other, involves the expulsion of the other. (Davies, 2004/2006, pp. 73–74)

The subject works hard in her attempts to position herself within or outside a category. Early childhood teachers must navigate binary oppositions such as professional/unprofessional as they seek to locate themselves and understand how their identities fit within this category. However, the category-maintenance process overall is much more complex than this. For example, it is possible to simultaneously be professional and unprofessional. A doctor, for instance, may have the required medical degree to attain registration, and thus, profess technical skills and knowledge that denote professionalism (Sachs, 2001; Yinger, 2005); however, the same doctor may be unprofessional in not adhering to codes of conduct and ethics prescribed by his or her professional association. In another example, findings from neuroscience may assign professional importance to the work of early childhood teachers; however, the discourse of care and nurturance renders this work unimportant because it is viewed as not requiring technical competence. This process opens possibilities for exploring the spaces in between opposing or binary discourses and locating new and different categories.

3.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This inquiry into constructions of early childhood teachers' professional identities draws on poststructuralist theory. Foucault's (1981, 1982, 1988b, 1995), work on discourse is central to the study. Identities are understood as constituted through the discursive practices that circulate as power/knowledge and regimes of truth. The ways in which discourses intersect, collide and connect through the cultural and political conditions at the time position discourses as historically contingent: a discursive truth at one point may change and re-emerge over time. Similarly, identities (re)emerge as discourses come together to produce particular ways of being. Understandings of identities as fluid, non-linear and continually emerging were further conceptualised in this chapter through poststructuralist feminist theories (Davies, 1993, 2004/2006; McNay, 1992, 2000; Walkerdine, 1990). These provided understandings into the multiple, complex and messy ways in which early childhood teachers' professional identities are produced.

In this study, the exploration of the traces and contours of discursive practices in the production and maintenance of professional identities do not provide truths, but instead, identify the complexities of early childhood teacher identity production. The problematising of early childhood teacher identities allows space to consider the contingencies in these identities and how they work together, or in tension, to produce the early childhood teacher.

The threads about discourse and identities that have been explored in this chapter work to construct an understanding of early childhood teachers' professional identities as being produced through the discursive conditions at the time. The theoretical framework for this research calls for methodology that is consistent with an approach to the constitution of identities through discourses. The following chapter draws on the theories of discourse and identities, and then explains how these theories were translated into the methodological approach used in this research.

Chapter 4: Methodology

Chapter 4 outlines the research methodology, including the basis for generating data and the approach to analysis. The chapter addresses the third research sub-question: How could such an inquiry into early childhood teachers' professional identities be designed and what sites would be worthwhile sites for investigation? (see Chapter 1, Section 1.2). To design this research project, it was necessary to use a methodology consistent with a poststructuralist orientation on identities, which was explained in Chapter 3. Poststructuralism works to unsettle taken-for-granted assumptions and recognise discourses that work as regimes of truth. New ways for "thinking otherwise" (Ball, 1998, p. 81) about the ways in which early childhood teachers' identities are produced become possible by making the dominant discourses visible. Foucault's work, particularly on discourse, power/knowledge, truth and resistance underpins this inquiry into identities. Theories of identities, first from Foucault's work, and later from others who theorise identities (Davies, 1993, 2003; McNay, 1992; Walkerdine, 1990; Weedon, 1997), provide a method of examining early childhood teachers' professional identities as produced through discourses, power/knowledge, resistance, regimes of truth, performativity and categories.

A poststructuralist theoretical framework calls for a methodological approach that is able to work with complexities, the unexpected, and messiness. Discourse analysis as a method provides one way to account for identities as produced at a particular point in time, and provides an appropriate fit with this theoretical lens. Through this treatment of the data it was possible to map discourses and identify discursive categories. This allowed for possible readings of early childhood teacher professional identities as they are they are "spoken into existence" (Sondergaard, 2002, p. 191). The approach to analysis proposed multiple, complex, and non-linear understandings of early childhood teacher professional identities.

The chapter initially returns to the Research Question that informed this thesis. Next, links are established between theory and method, a feature considered to be integral to research (Silverman, 2009). Then, a more detailed discussion is provided about the methodology used in this project, which was predominantly discourse

analysis. This section explains the analytical tools that were drawn on and the reasons that decisions were made in terms of data collection and data analysis. Next, the research design is outlined, with attention to the data collection and analysis. The data sets are introduced, with particular attention to data management and analysis. Validity and reliability are important to all research, and the next section outlines what Silverman (2009) explains as appropriate and necessary consideration: the authenticity and integrity of research. The final section of the chapter explains the study's ethical framework, which is the key to all research (Creswell, 2005; Glesne, 2006). .

4.1 RESEARCH QUESTION

The key research question that informed this study:

- How are early childhood teachers' professional identities currently produced?

4.2 THEORY AND METHODOLOGY: THE LINKS

It is important to note that this project was not designed as an advocacy or redemptive project and did not seek a *right* or *good* identity for early childhood teachers to develop. Instead, this study has problematised identities to scrutinise some of the current discourses that are woven together to produce these teachers' professional identities. The discursive practices rendering the sayable and unsayable that work to "both to constrain and to enable" (McWilliam, 2007, p. 2) early childhood teachers' professional identities is of particular interest to those who teach them at university; however, this topic will also be of interest to others beyond the tertiary sector, such as policy makers and practitioners.

This research explores the traces and contours in the discursive production and maintenance of early childhood teachers' professional identities. Rather than a quest for generalisations and consensus on what makes an early childhood teacher professional, this study looked for "dissensus" (Hughes & MacNaughton, 2000) and the "unpredictable collision of interests" (McCarthy, 1995, p. 255). In this way, it was possible to reconsider how child care and work in child care were spoken into existence.

Foucault's notion of discourse informed both the research design and the approach to data analysis. In this concept of discourse, words "systematically form the objects of which they speak" (Foucault, 1972/1989, p. 49) and work to shape "grids and hierarchies for the institutional categorization and treatment of people" (Luke, 1995–96, p. 8). This study aimed to locate and map some of the discourses that are in circulation and how they come together to produce early childhood teachers' professional identities. Working with Foucault's notion of discourse was not easy; Foucault did not purport a method for discourse analysis. It was necessary to draw on the work of a number of researchers who have applied Foucault's thinking, including Sondergaard (2005), who used discourse analysis to examine assessment practices in academic contexts, and Osgood (2012), who studied "negotiating professional identities in early childhood" (see Section 4.4 for further explanation).

The interpretation of discourse analysis used in this study is complex, messy and non-prescriptive, but it is not an "anything goes" approach to analysing data. A poststructuralist inquiry is able to maintain rigour and authenticity without having to find an answer or a truth. The following section outlines several different approaches to discourse analysis and then explains the approach undertaken in this study.

4.3 METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research design provides scope to look to "complexities of the social world" (Edwards, 2001, p. 117) and to develop "detailed understanding of a central phenomenon" (Creswell, 2005, p. 45). At the same time, qualitative research enables "access to the web of interactions" (Edwards, 2001, p. 117) that relate to the central phenomenon. These characteristics of qualitative research are consistent with the research intention to explore complexities in the discursive production of identities.

Qualitative research is "open and supple" and it includes diverse "philosophies, theories, and research designs and methods" (Freeman, deMarrais, Preissle, Roulston, & St. Pierre, 2007, p. 25). Poststructuralism is suggestive of research designs that are open to possibilities and surprises and that involve a researcher who is willing to "look awry at what seems commonsensical and normal" (St. Pierre, 2002, p. 417). At the same time, a poststructuralist-informed methodology has the

potential to be “productive, fun and transgressive” (Sondergaard, 2002, p. 187). The data collection and data analysis approaches within this research design allowed space for different ways of looking, and for new possibilities to be generated.

Through the use of poststructuralist methodology, it was possible to question taken-for-granted assumptions and challenge dominant ways of thinking, being and speaking early childhood teacher identities. According to Luke: “the principal methodological contribution of Foucault’s poststructuralism has been to reinforce scepticism toward transparency of talk” (1995–96, p. 9).

The talk, the words on the page, became a space to trace the discourses at play. This approach called for an analysis of the relevant discourses and how they come together to produce identities.

4.4 DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Discourse analysis is a method that accounts for identities as produced at a particular point in time and it provides an appropriate fit with this study’s poststructuralist theoretical lens. As a methodological approach, discourse analysis can map the interconnected web of discursive practices that are located within data; however, there is “no recipe for conducting a discourse analysis of a text” and the findings are “not fixed in advance” (Gottlieb, 1989, p. 141). This methodological approach is not about neat, linear findings, but could create new possibilities to consider the constitution of early childhood teachers’ professional identities, and in so doing, address uneasiness about these discursive productions.

My research located professional identities of early childhood teachers as a discursive event (Foucault, 1984b). Discourse analysis was used to interrogate the production of identities. To understand what the methodology in my research entailed, it is valuable to outline some of the different forms of discourse analysis and make explicit the intentions of this research. By locating some of the available discourses at a point in time, a grid was used to map some of the discourses that work to shape identities.

Discourse analysis has many forms, each underpinned by a theoretical orientation. For example, psycholinguistic consideration of discourse is concerned with a “language-based area”, including early childhood language (Luke, 1995–96, p. 8). Sociolinguistic discourse studies also consider “the constructed nature of

written and spoken texts” (Luke, 1995–96, p. 8), though they explain “texts by reference to rule-governed, learned social interaction and performance” (p. 8). Another distinct form of this research method is critical discourse analysis, or CDA, in which primary consideration is given to textual features to understand meanings behind spoken and written words (Fairclough, 1995, 2003; Taylor, 2004). CDA studies the “micropolitics of discourse” and the “actual patterns of language use” (Luke, 1995–96, p. 11). This research approach purports to bring together “macro” approaches to analysing text by examining the discourses at play, with and the “microanalytic text analyses” (p. 10). Therefore, CDA focuses on linguistic and structural elements of text.

Discourse analysis methods that draws on poststructural theorists, including Foucault, “avoid the substitution of one truth for another (Graham, 2005, p. 3). Feminist poststructuralist discourse analysis opens possibilities that allow “... greater recognition and connection between people of competing viewpoints and ultimately may prompt social and educational transformation” (Baxter, 2002, p. 5). Thus, this approach to research methodology opens the way to at look new and different possibilities.

Foucauldian-informed discourse analysis was adopted as this project’s research method so that the research was consistent with poststructuralist theory. The term *method* is used here in a non-prescriptive way, but it flags the research framework and the design element of methodological and substantive theory (Luke & McArdle, 2009). This is a different way of considering methodology to one that adheres to the “scientificity” of research, while at the same time, resisting a “methodological reductionism” (Lather, 2006, p. 787), where anything goes. Foucault “attempted deliberately to move beyond descriptive research and to use discourse analysis to critique and challenge dominant institutional practices” (Luke, 1995–96, p. 10). This approach to discourse analysis maps the discourses at play that shape what is sayable and unsayable as regimes of truth. Foucault was reticent to specify research method and said: “I take care not to dictate how things should be” (1994, p. 288); however, he does provide a strong methodological theory for considering the discursive construction of identities through a particular approach to discourse analysis.

The theoretical orientation of this thesis illuminates an approach that is consistent with Foucault’s notion of discourse. So it is with an element of

“‘Foucauldianistic’ reticence” (Graham, 2005, p. 2, original emphasis) that the method in this study is described as discourse analysis informed by poststructuralist theory, in particular, Foucault’s work on discourse, power/knowledge, regimes of truth and resistance.

4.4.1 Principles of method

Although not a prescriptive method, there are a number of principles in a Foucauldian-informed discourse analysis. Foucault’s assistant, who wrote under the pseudonym “Maurice Florence”, reedited text that was written almost entirely by Foucault, though submitted under her name (Faubion, 1994). In this reedited text, a number of “rules of method” (Florence, 1994, p. 462) for discourse analysis are explained. First, it is proposed to “circumvent the anthropological universals ... in order to examine (the nature of the human being) as historical constructs” (p. 462). Attention to the historical point in time is therefore important to consider in an inquiry into the production of early childhood teachers’ professional identities. Second, this approach to analysis “must also reverse the philosophical way of proceeding upward to the constituent subject which is asked to account for every possible object of knowledge in general” (Florence, 1994, p. 462). It is not necessary, nor possible, to attempt to locate every discursive condition that produces the early childhood teachers’ professional identities. Rather, looking to the subtleties, the reversals and minute deviations will offer rich consideration in the constitution of identities. In this inquiry, a location of dominant discourses that worked as regimes of truth to produce particular identities was, therefore, a focus. The discursive practices that were at play were located, rather than attempting to explain each discourse and the intersections between them. This approach to mapping discourses was consistent with the conception of identities as complex and non-linear.

The third “principle of method” that Florence outlines is to “address ‘practices’ as a domain of analysis, approach the study from the angle of what ‘was done’” (Florence, 1994, p. 462). What was *done with* the early childhood preservice teachers in this study enabled possibilities to consider identities constituted through competing, colliding and intersecting discourses. This approach resists a “true” (p. 462) understanding and explanation of the conditions that produce identities. Rather, “in an altogether different way” (p. 463) there is a focus on “the ensemble of more or less regulated, more or less deliberate, more or less finalised ways of doing things”.

This approach looked to possible discursive rules that produce identities and the ways in which they are spoken into existence. At the same time, this approach to working with the data resists a final truth and questions “the intelligibility of truth/s we have come to take for granted” (Graham, 2012, p. 115)

4.4.2 Discourse: from language to text

Previously in this chapter, I have drawn distinctions between different approaches to discourse analysis. In poststructuralist analysis, language discursively constructs what is thought and done (Gottlieb, 1989), though the focus is not on linguistics or semantics. The resistance to the idea that discourse is “purely [a] linguistic term” (Kendall & Wickham, 1999, p. 35) resists a hidden meaning where discourse is looked at in a “transparent way” (McArdle, 2001a, p. 100). Discourses that are constructed through language are not straightforward tools for transferring meaning. As a method, discourse analysis calls into question the very nature of transparency and a truth. However, considering the discourse as the “the general domain of all statements” (Foucault, 1972/1989, p. 80) that are read in the text opens possibilities to analyse the “social organization, social meanings, power and individual consciousness” (Weedon, 1997, p. 21). There is therefore a resistance to the “transparency of language”, when a *real* meaning resides in or behind the words.

In the *Order of things: An archaeology of the human sciences*, Foucault (2002) refutes the concept that language is a transparent tool. Through this work, it is argued that “language has its own materiality and solidity and its own patterns of order right from its original inception” (O’Farrell, 2011). Foucauldian-informed discourse analysis is therefore oriented towards the discursive structures that are inherent in language, rather than a focus on pure linguistics.

This different conception of language, beyond linguistics, shifts the focus to discursive practices, and as a result, promotes different ways of reading the data. Through this treatment, the data is “read as *texts*” (McArdle, 2001a, p. 99, original emphasis). Texts include a range of mediums of expression, including spoken, written, non-verbal or physical (Halliday, 1995). The “performativity” (Butler, 1997) of being an early childhood teacher, in which the act of being is “enabled precisely by the contexts from which it breaks” (p. 40), sees texts as central to how identities are shaped. Therefore, data in this study were generated and read as texts.

Poststructuralist analysis considers text as a broad term (Lather, 2001) that encompasses buildings, statements and practices that are open to multiple readings, rather than seeking to locate something at the core as a true meaning. This conception of data calls for “treatment of texts as flat surfaces across which one can discern patterns of order” (O’Farrell, n.d.). Just as words do not have a hidden meaning, it is impossible to “go beyond the discursive ‘surface’ to a ‘deeper inside’ of ‘thought’” in discourse analysis (Kendall & Wickham, 1999, p. 37). In discourse analysis, there is no truth waiting to be revealed as “the surface is all there is” (p. 37). As I worked with this orientation of the data as text, my focus was on the location and intersection of discourses that worked to produce identities. Within these texts, discourses were located, with a focus on the intersections and connections between them. When data is read as texts, different ways of thinking about early childhood teachers’ professional identities are made possible. A number of analytic tools were used, including a focus on statements within the texts, which provided “no more than a description of regularities, contestations, and possibilities” (McArdle, 2001a, p. 109). This will be further explained in Section 4.6.3.

4.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research questions, outlined in Chapter 1, provide the backdrop for explaining the research design of this study. In order to firmly anchor the research design, I return to the guiding research question:

- How are early childhood teachers’ professional identities currently produced?

This study was “theoretically driven rather than determined by technical consideration” (Silverman, 2009, p. 29). From a poststructuralist orientation, I drew on a position that resisted a construction of researcher objectivity and the assumption that the researcher “is capable of producing truth from the experience of being there” (Britzman, 2000, p. 20). With this in mind, the premise was that this research would work as a dialogue, not a monologue (Tyler, 1986). The intention was to develop a research design that would enable close attention to the research questions and contribute to the ongoing research conversation on identities in early childhood.

Resistance to work in child care was a catalyst for initiating this research project. Therefore, this study on early childhood teachers’ professional identities may

have been designed using quantitative research that focused on a survey instrument as a form of measurement. This would have possibly provided some answers and claims about child care and work in child care. However, such a research design would not have enabled me to engage, as a researcher, in some of the subtleties, nuances and intricacies that constitute the early childhood teacher. In her exploration of genealogy, McWilliam (1999) writes of her attraction “to work *with the shreds*, because I expect them to offer up more interesting possibilities for analysis and discursive organization of teaching at this point of historical time” (p. 182, original emphasis). The data analysis in my study provides one reading of these shreds, rather than looking to reform the whole fabric. My research is not about telling a complete story, and as such, does not make claims that what I have distilled through the analysis speaks for early childhood. I was interested in the subtleties, nuances and intricacies that act as surprises and provocations in research and enable different and new possibilities about identities, and their formation, in early childhood. In turn, this might inform future iterations of early childhood courses and have implications in the field of early childhood beyond tertiary education.

This research design was informed by six research studies, which are outlined below.

4.5.1 Studies that informed my research design

In developing a research design, I looked to studies that were similar to mine in that they employed a poststructuralist approach to discourse analysis. A summary of these studies, listed in order from most to least influential on my research design, is provided in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

Summary of Research that Informed my Research Design

Researcher	Research focus	Data sets	Data analysis
Sondergaard (2005)	Formal assessment practice in academic contexts	Interviews	Poststructuralist discourse analysis
Osgood (2012)	Professional identities in early childhood	Policy documents Interviews Focus group discussions Informal observations	Poststructuralist discourse analysis
Langford (2005)	Early childhood educator preparation	Student assignment Interviews Textbooks	Coding and categories
Pendergast (1999)	Discursive construction of the home economics teacher	Surveys Interviews	Textual and contextual analysis
Graham (2007)	ADHD as a discursive formation	Documents	Discourse analysis
Dwyer (2006)	Fashion model as a discursive effect	Literature Focus groups	Poststructuralist discourse analysis Ironic categories

The rest of this section discusses these six studies in more detail, including information such as the orientation of the study, the method of data collection, the approach to analysis, and finally, the relevance to my research.

First, I looked to Sondergaard's (2005) research that focused on "ways in which sociocultural categories interfere with more formal assessment practices in academic contexts" (p. 189). In this research, Sondergaard generated data from interviews with 18 academics. Data analysis involved the location of "intersections", with a focus on discourses of "sex/gender, age, power and disciplinary position" (p. 189). This study has particular relevance to my research, as the treatment of texts to map intersections has highlighted the "highly complex network of discursive practices" that came together to "tone and transform" people's pathways in life. In a similar way, I looked to discursive practices that shaped and informed early childhood teachers' professional identities. Additionally, Sondergaard's focus on the "constituting processes that lead to questions" in terms of being "spoken into existence" led to questions such as: Through which discursive processes does it emerge? What conditions do this or that particular speech and practice impose on

particular individuals for understanding themselves and others? These questions provided a guide for me to develop my own questions to interrogate the data.

Next, I was drawn to Osgood's (2012) research on "negotiating professional identities in early childhood", where the focus was on work in nurseries in London. Poststructuralist feminist theories informed this research, and discourse analysis used to critically analyse the data. The methods in this study included document policy analysis, interviews (stakeholder, life history, semi-structured), focus group discussions and informal observations of "day-to-day practices in the nurseries". Of interest to me, and of particular relevance for my research design, was Osgood's approach to data analysis. As she was "confronted with endless pages of text", she worked to "transform them into interesting and meaningful research findings" (p. 35). Her initial readings, and re-readings, "produced an intimate familiarity with the discursive landscape" (p. 35). Osgood explains that analysis involves "searching for patterns in the data (in terms of both commonalities and differences)" (p. 35). These were strategies that I drew on in my research to locate discourses and identify the intersections between them that produce identities. The analysis that Osgood engaged in also involved "searching for the function and effect of what people say". So too, I was interested in the discursive production of speaking into existence early childhood teachers' identities.

Third, I turned to Langford's (2005) research in which she sought to unsettle and bring into question the discourses that underpinned the discursive construction of the "good" early childhood practitioner. The research was informed by critical and feminist theoretical frameworks, with the intention to explore how early childhood preparation programs "produce and prepare the female ECE graduate to work in a stratified gendered, labour market" (p. ii). Langford's research was positioned within an early childhood preparation programs, and data was drawn from "college training program materials", including student assignments, interviews and a selection of textbooks. The data analysis relied on a coding system that was informed by codes generated out of initial analysis of student assignments. The interview transcripts and the selections of texts were coded using the research questions and these categories. This study had relevance to my research as it is situated within early childhood educator preparation programs, and mapped some of the dominant discourses that produce "one identity" of the "good" early childhood practitioner. I was interested in

the process that Langford used to develop a preliminary coding system, from her initial analysis of student assignments. In a similar way I created a “start list of constructs” (Lasky, 2005, p. 904) from the review of the literature, to enable my preliminary readings of the data.

Next, I was drawn to doctoral research conducted by Pendergast (1999) where she focused on the discursive construction of home economics teachers. As a profession with a “negative history of beliefs”, home economics was a site to explore “taken for granted assumption about what constitutes valued and valuable knowledge in our society” (p. 1). This research looked to the ways that these assumptions and values, and knowledge render home economics teachers as marginalised and offered “a reconstituted set of possibilities” through a “postmodern re-conception”. This study had relevance to my research through the ways in which a field, with similarly low status to child care, is produced through discourses. In a similar way to Pendergast “re-looking at home economics through this new lens”, I wanted to re-look at early childhood, where my work could also “unsettle[s] the comfort zone” (p. 2).

Pendergast’s (1999) study involved three parts: Study One and Study Two were surveys of three hundred home economics teachers, through which accounts of “home economics as a pedagogical performance” (p. 92) was located. Data in Study Three was generated through interviews with home economics teachers who identified as “marginal”. Data was analysed using “textual and contextual analysis” (p. 93). Through analysis, it was the intention to “produce readings which are attentive to the possibilities that exist within marginal identities” (p. 94). I was interested in the location of the “teaching bodies” being “constantly ‘in trouble’” as they oscillated between “attempts to be ‘normal’ and to embrace their ‘deviant’ status” (p. 94). This study has relevance to my research design as my data as it considered the ways in which the regimes of truth worked to normalise the identities of early childhood teachers. In a similar way to Pendergast (1999) worked with “the intention...to insist that multiple readings are not simply desirable but possible” (p. 98), I was drawn to exploring the possibilities in early childhood teachers’ professional identities. Further, I was drawn to the “body as text” through which she used graphics to explore identities. I used this tool in data analysis to illustrate discourses being held together.

The fifth study that informed my research design was by Graham (2007). She drew on Foucault's notion of a technical/discursive grid to examine ADHD as a discursive formation. A method of discourse analysis was used "as documents and the concepts they describe were dissected" (Graham, 2007, p. 21). The ways in which documents were dissected, discourses located, and the rules that were in play were an approach that had particular synergy with my research approach. This study was relevant to my research design, as the tools and techniques that Graham used informed my approach to analysing data.

Finally, my research design was informed by Dwyer (2006), who explored the "relationship between the fashion model and the young girl in contemporary Western culture". Poststructuralist theory was used in this thesis to consider the influence of the fashion model as a "*discursive effect*" (Dwyer, 2006, p. vi, original emphasis), which works to produce "effects for better *and* for worse" (p. vi, original emphasis). Through poststructuralist discourse analysis, Dwyer located discourses. To "avoid re-affirming traditional binaries" she read the data as "ironic, working within and between binaries such as disorder/delight" (p. vii). From these readings, three ironic categories were "produced out of the analysis". This study had relevance to my research design, as it utilised irony as a tool in data analysis. The use of irony encouraged a re-conceptualisation of traditional binaries, that for my data analysis may constrain ways of thinking about professional identities of early childhood teachers.

Each of these six studies informed my research design in the ways that have been discussed. Two key decisions that I was faced with when designing this research were how I would generate data, and then how this data would be analysed. Below, I outline each of these processes.

4.6 DATA

In order to conduct this inquiry, descriptive data was generated that produced words or texts (Creswell, 2005, p. 39) as language practices. This data was read as texts, and through this treatment, the data enabled discursive mappings of identities. There were two data sets, and the rationale for each is explained below:

1. Document-as-text: a selected key government document; and
2. Talk-as-text: focus groups conducted with early childhood preservice teachers

4.6.1 Data set one: document-as-text

Text is a source of data, words or images that are published without the “intervention of a researcher” (Silverman, 2009, p. 52). Data set one was a key, purposely selected text, a political document. Documents are a valuable source of data for qualitative research (Creswell, 2005) and provide a source of data “ready for analysis” (p. 219). Beyond this convenience, policy documents provide important windows into discourses that are in circulation. As sites, the documents have the capacity to influence people’s behaviour, thoughts and actions (Fulcher, 1989). The intention was to select a document or documents that enabled the location of some of the discourses that were working to produce identities in early childhood. I therefore looked to a document that was read as pivotal in creating a shift in the early childhood landscape.

The selection of the document-as-text was read as “a moment of arising” (Foucault, 1984a, p. 83), or the emergence of an important shift in early childhood in Australia. At the time of data collection, there was anticipation of things being different in education in Australia. The ALP, then in opposition, was in full election-mode and they promoted their “education revolution” as an inevitable, necessary change that the country required. Among this, early years reform gained profile and momentum, with intense interest from the profession and extensive media coverage. The document selected as data emerged in these conditions and it was read as a key shift for early childhood: *New Directions for Early Childhood Education: Universal access to early learning for 4 year olds* (Rudd & Macklin, 2007b).

The *New Directions* document mapped out reforms for early childhood, including curriculum, national standards and workforce issues. A key part of the workforce issues called for a shift in qualification requirements. The attention on staff qualifications, promoted an early years workforce that included the new requirement for “four-year university trained” teachers to work in before-school contexts, including for the first time in child care. Although some states in Australia

had been working with legislation that required teacher qualifications (for example in NSW), the shift to include four-year qualified was new, and was generated much interest from within the field, including the child care sector.

Given that four-year university-qualified teachers had been profiled in government documents as part of a newly envisaged early years workforce, my intention in research design was to include voices of preservice early childhood teachers. The issue of early childhood preservice teachers beliefs about children in child care had been raised (Ailwood & Boyd, 2006), and research carried out into early childhood teacher career aspirations in regard to work in child care (Thorpe et al., 2011). I was keen to explore in more detail, the complexities that produce these ways of thinking about child care, and work in child care. Additionally, my own experience working in child care, alongside anecdotal observations of preservice teachers' negativity to child care (outlined in Chapter 1; see Section 1.1.1), compelled me to conduct a rigorous inquiry into early childhood teacher professional identities.

4.6.2 Data set two: talk-as-text

Policy and documents provide one source of data. However, there are many possibilities for which discourses are in play (Foucault, 1981, 1990b). I was therefore curious to see what discourses were available to early childhood preservice teachers as they spoke professional identities.

Focus group interviews were conducted to generate talk-as-text data. In this approach, participants were “offered some topic or stimulus material and then encouraged to discuss it amongst themselves” (Silverman, 2001, p. 83). There are a number of ways to conduct focus groups, with “no particular ‘right’ way” (Christensen & Dwyer, 2004, p. 1). There are however, a number of principles that shape how to conduct a focus group (Ryan & Lobman, 2007), and the following informed this part of the research design. First, it purported that the number of focus groups conducted should be between four and eight (Morgan, 2004), with between four and six participants in each (Creswell, 2005, p. 215). This number of participants generates richness in the data by allowing different voices and opinions to be heard (Ryan & Lobman, 2007). Next, the researcher asks a set of questions that “elicits responses from all individuals in the group” (Creswell, 2005, p. 215). The

role of the researcher or the focus group moderator is pivotal in generating data, and ensuring that all participants have the opportunity to respond to the questions and contribute to discussion. For this reason, it is suggested that there is a process of turn taking in focus groups (Creswell, 2005).

The use of focus groups interviews was an appropriate match with my research focus for a number of reasons. First, the focus group approach provided data from individuals within a group context, with the possibility to “collect shared understanding from several individuals as well as to get views from specific people” (Creswell, 2005, p. 215). This dynamic of this interaction enabled data to be generated about early childhood teachers’ professional identities as a “text of knowledge” (Dwyer, 2006, p. 17). Second, the site of preservice teacher education was appropriate as it provided data from preservice teachers. This enabled the location of discourses that emerged through their participation in an early childhood degree qualification—a focus for the current government reform, foreshadowed in Data set one: *New Directions*.

Situating preservice teacher education

My research looked to preservice early childhood teachers, who with their Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) qualification, would meet the government requirement for four year university qualified teachers to work in before-school contexts, including child care. As part of the new workforce reform, preservice teachers would be positioned to take up the call for greater number of university-qualified teachers to work in child care.

In Australia there are a number of variations in early childhood teacher education courses. Most courses focus on children birth to eight years and are four year degrees (Watson & Axford, 2008). Some early childhood teacher education programs have a broader focus on children birth to twelve years, and others focus on the before-school years, with a focus on birth to five

The “local site” (Osgood, 2012, p. 7) to which I turned my attention was preservice teacher education, and in particular course content and program design. Just as Osgood looked at nursery provision as the local site to which she considered the professional identities of the “nursery worker” as “crucial to this research”

(Osgood, 2012, p. 7), preservice teacher education provision was integral to my research on early childhood teachers' professional identities.

Consideration of preservice teacher education and courses provides one of a number of power/knowledge backdrops through which to consider identities production. That is not to say that it is only teacher education that shapes and informs their speaking into existence (Sondergaard, 2002) child care and work in child care. It is one of many lenses, including power/knowledge, through which early childhood teachers' professional identities are discursively shaped. In addition, the *New Directions* document presumes that preservice teacher education is critical to its agenda.

Conducting the focus groups

The participants in the talk-as-text focus groups were preservice teachers enrolled in the Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood), a four-year degree course offered at a large Australian metropolitan university. The participants were enrolled in a course with a focus on birth to eight years. The study “zooms in” (Bresler, 1994) on a child care field experience unit, typically undertaken by preservice teachers in their third year of study. Four focus groups were drawn from preservice teachers enrolled in the unit EDB013 Early childhood field studies 3: Diversity and inclusivity, located in the third year the course.³ Each focus group had four or five participants, resulting in a total sample size of 18.

The reason for seeking the focus group from this cohort of students was two-fold. First, their current study focus, on child care birth to three, provided a context for them to draw on that had complementarity with the research focus and the questions. Second, the preservice teachers were in the third year of a four-year course, and as such, they had experiences within the course. The participants were therefore positioned, once they had graduated, to work in a range of early years contexts, such as child care, kindergarten/preschool and lower primary school.

Some of the participants had previously worked in child care, or were currently working in child care. A number of the participants had gained prior course credit because they had completed a TAFE diploma or advanced diploma qualification. The

³ The four-year early childhood degree is the context from which participants were drawn. However, to what extent the course shapes and affects the opinions of the participants was not the focus of this study. That is a possibility for another study, as proposed in Chapter 8. The course summary sheet for the teacher education program in which the participants were enrolled in included as Appendix B.

university entry requirement allowed diploma-qualified entrants to gain up to one year's credit for the four-year degree program.

In the week one four tutorial classes students were asked to form small groups that would be work together as a *community of learners* across the semester, supporting each other with unit and course engagement. This pedagogical approach is embedded in my teaching in order to support deep-level thinking, reflexivity and peer relationships (Sumsion, 2005). From each of the four tutorial classes, one group from each who were willing to participate in a focus group for this study was identified and those participant groups were moved to a quiet, comfortable room for their discussions to be recorded. Sampling was selective (Creswell, 2005; Silverman, 2001, 2009), with pre-determined criteria used to establish groups with a cross-section of experiences in child care (see Appendix A). However, there is no claim in this research that the groups were representative of preservice teacher cohorts, nor the early childhood profession. Ethical considerations are discussed in more detail in Section 4.8.

The focus group questions (see Appendix C) were drawn from a preliminary literature review and were developed in two parts that were designed to probe the research question. Attention to the questions ensured that the data generated was “rich” (Bloor, Frankland, Thomas, & Robson, 2001, p. vii) and would provide the basis for poststructuralist discourse analysis. The aim of the questions was to prompt talk by the participants, which could be later analysed for some of the discourses that shape early childhood teachers’ professional identities. The first list of questions focused on child care, with questions to generate talk about the purpose of child care, images of child care and the influence of their early childhood teaching degree on this talk. The second list of questions focused on professional identities. These questions were developed to generate data about work in child care, including the participants’ own experiences, views and career aspirations in relation to child care.

An external moderator was engaged to conduct the focus groups. My role was the co-ordinator of the unit, which involved delivering the lectures, conducting tutorials, and looking after the administration and assessment. Many of the preservice teacher participants would have been familiar with me because I had co-ordinated a unit in the first year of the degree, which, for the majority of students, was two years prior. In part, due to my pre-existing relationship with the students and their

knowledge of my theoretical and pedagogical approaches, the decision was made that I would not conduct the focus groups.

The one-hour focus groups were conducted during the first week of the semester as it was considered important to obtain data prior to participants' engagement in the unit, which has a strong focus on advocacy for child care. At the commencement of each focus group, the moderator engaged in general discussion by way of ice-breaker questions (Morrison-Beedy et al., 2001; Silverman, 2009) such as: "You're all going to graduate at the end of this year? Is that right?" She then introduced the purpose of the focus group: "The purpose of today is to put some questions to you that identify some of the discourses that shape child care and professional identities." The moderator was not an expert in child care and was chosen deliberately to encourage participants to more fully explain their point of view. The moderator explained her status to the participants: "I'm a person who knows very little about child care, so I'm asking you what it's like—what is the child care experience like?"

The focus groups participants had experienced a two-hour lecture in the child care field studies unit just prior to their discussions. This lecture provided an overview of the unit's main topics and assessment tasks, and included discussion about arrangements for each student's four-week field placement in a child care centre at the end of the semester. Additionally, protocols for class attendance and participation were addressed.

Data from the four focus group interviews was audio-taped and transcribed. The process of converting the spoken words into written text was valuable in the data analysis process because it enabled multiple readings of the data: first as audio and then as text.

The following section outlines the processes of analysing the two data sets.

4.6.3 Data management and analysis

To analyse the two data sets, I drew on Foucault's concept of a *tool box* for my approach to data analysis. A strategy that Foucault used in his work, I was able to "rummage through" a tool box in order "to find a tool" (Foucault, 1974/1994, p. 523) (or tools) that I could apply in my research. This provided a "set of concepts of methods" that enabled me to analyse the data (Silverman, 2009, p. 55). The

theoretical framework for my research produced these key analytical tools, which I applied as lenses in my analysis of the data. In the analysis of the data, I was “looking for trouble” (McArdle, 2001b, p. 295) as a way of locating collisions and tensions between discourses.

As outlined earlier in this chapter, my approach to discourse analysis drew on theoretical framework that included Foucault’s notion of discourse, as well as conceptions of power/knowledge, regimes of truth and resistance. Additionally, this framework drew on poststructuralist feminist theorists understandings of identities (Davies, 1993, 2004/2006; McNay, 1992; Osgood, 2006, 2012; Walkerdine, 1990, 1992; Weedon, 1997, 1999). These frameworks worked as conceptual lenses through which I read the data.

The data was read as texts, which Foucault considered as suggestive of rules of conduct. I was interested in what was discursively allowed, and what was disallowed discursively. My analysis of the data was informed by a number of tools to assist the meticulous plotting of the discursive practices that constitute early childhood teacher professional identities. First, I looked to locate discourses, as the words that “systematically form the objects of which they speak” (Foucault, 1972/1989, p. 49). On the first pass of my reading of the data, I identified what I thought might be a particular discourse at work.

Next, I looked for collisions or to the intersections between these discourses, as an interconnected, web-like interplay across and between discursive practices. For Foucault, the analysis of discourse “... involved the description of particular collection of utterances (enunciations) with a view to establishing their regularities” (Creswell, 1997, p. 133). As I noted regularities, I mapped patterns and repetitions across and within discourses, and in doing so, made connections between them.

I also looked to intersections of power/knowledge “where those points become capillary” (Foucault, 1980b, p. 96). Then, I looked for indications that discourses are constituted as regimes of truth, or the rules that allow discourses to be brought into circulation. Deconstructing and reconstructing discursive practices or structure/rules “can help us rewrite the world and ourselves again and again” (St. Pierre, 2000, p. 483). I was particularly interested in what appeared to be sayable and unsayable in speaking child care and work in child care. I was also interested in how are these practices governed, and who “policing the boundaries”.

The two data sets were initially considered separately. After that, links were made across them, with connections located between and across the document-as-text and talk-as-text. The data was examined for discursive practices, and in particular the dominant discourses, that are currently in play in the shaping early childhood teachers' identities. Figure 4.1 provides illustrates the interconnection between the data sets.

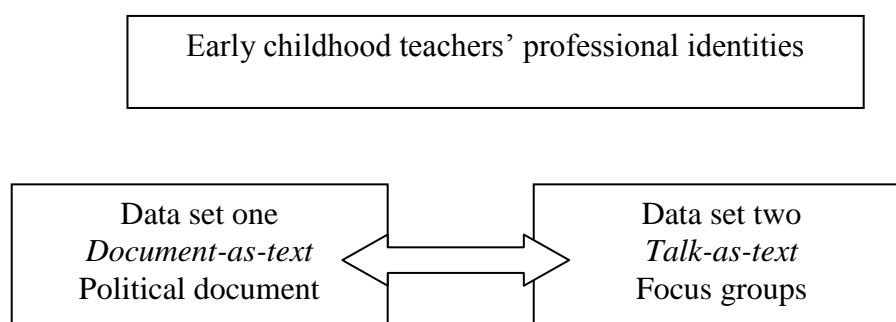


Figure 4.1. Two data sets.

The focus on data analysis was to locate discursive practices in the data sets, talk-as-text and document-as-text. Reading discourses this way worked to “destabilize what is taken for granted and expose it for reflection” (Sondergaard, 2002, p. 191). This process enabled examination of how professional identities are “constituted and reconstituted through discursive practices” (Osgood, 2010, p. 25) drawing from available discourses.

The data was read and re-read through a process of working in a similar way to panning for gold. I looked to the whole, though it was not the whole that I wanted to work with. It was the little specks, not just of gold, but other “sediment”. Just as McWilliam (1999) wanted to work “with the shreds” (p. 182) rather than the whole fabric, this research looked to the subtleties, intricacies, nuances that were read into the data.

By mapping the “constituting processes” (Sondergaard, 2002, p. 191) in professional identities I looked to how child care and work in child care “is spoken into existence” (p. 191). To “think against the stream of what is taken for granted” (p. 191) enabled possibilities to “think otherwise” (McArdle & McWilliam, 2005, p. 12) child care and work in child care. Sondergaard’s research (outlined earlier in this chapter), included questions that I drew on to develop propositions to interrogate the

data. These propositions were a framework through which I viewed the data and asked questions of it. In particular, I looked to:

- How are early childhood teacher identities spoken into existence and practised?
- Through which discursive practices do these identities emerge, and in what kinds of contexts?
- “What conditions do this or that particular speech and practice impose on particular individuals for understanding themselves and others?” (Sondergaard, 2005, p. 189)
- “How do they take up discursive practices as their own and how do they negotiate them?” (Sondergaard, 2005, p. 189)

Working with the data was not simply a re-presenting of the texts. The location of discourses governing early childhood teachers’ professional identities involved the use of “...discourse analysis to critique and challenge dominant institutional practices” (Luke, 1995–96, p. 10). The meticulous process of mapping discourses enabled ways in which the early childhood teacher is produced to be located.

The work of the artist William Kentridge was useful to conceptualise and the process of engaging in discourse analysis, and offered a way to work with the data. Kentridge “looks to irony and ambiguity” (Cathcart, 2012) as part of an ongoing conversation. He shares that “all images are subject to erasure and addiction”. In a similar way, the treatment of the data in my inquiry was to create discursive traces that worked with Kentridge’s view that there are always possibilities for transformation of the world. Through his work, he says that “at a certain point his art is reduced”. The treatment of the data works in my inquiry was not reductionalist in the sense of some essence or truth, though was one possible reading of the discursive traces. Kentridge is well known for his use of charcoal, and he has recently started using a blue crayon in his work as a “provocation to contribute something new” and something “other”. The blue crayon has become Kentridge’s way to annotate on drawings—“like marking a forensic photograph”. In this inquiry into early childhood teachers’ professional identities, I engaged in a similar process to mark the text as forensic photographs, where the discursive traces are located and marked.

The management and reduction of data enabled the processes of analysis. The analysis of data involved the “process of interpreting data, and of moving data

around in order to make sense of it” (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004, p. 266). The data, for instance, is not represented in this study according to the four separate and distinct focus groups. The point of this study is not to follow individual preservice teachers and look for consistencies. Instead, reading the data as text means to examine the language used in the document and accounts from the preservice teachers. Through the analysis of these accounts, points of contestation and contradiction around the production of identities were located. These nodal points were the basis for exploration about the discursive production and maintenance of early childhood teachers’ identities. The discourses that emerged from the document and the focus group interview data were identified and coded. This formed a basis for analysis of the documents, a similar data analysis tool to that employed by Langford (2005).

Leximancer© for data management

The software program Leximancer© was used as a data management tool to support the organisation of the data sets. Leximancer© was useful for managing or keeping track of data, without losing closeness to the data, important in qualitative research (Bazeley & Richards, 2000). The data sets were uploaded into Leximancer© and the colour coded concept maps were generated. The concept maps in provide a visual representation the concepts and themes in data, according to the frequency in which they appear. This process enabled a set of dominant themes and concepts to be produced. Leximancer© also provided a set of core vocabularies from the document. The intention to engage with the program was not to analyse the data, but rather to throw up some surprises and provocations to make as springboards for my data analysis. Through this function, key concepts are displayed as single words surrounded by a bubble. The size of the bubble is a measure of the frequency with which the concepts appear. Leximancer© was a valuable data management tool for providing a “fly over” of the data, and in doing so provided other, and different ways of seeing and reducing the data. However, its use was restricted to management of the data, and did not replace multiple readings of the data and close engagement within features of the text that might have been easily overlooked by this modernist approach to data.

The approach to data analysis for this study is outlined in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2

Summary of Data Analysis

Data set	Data generation	Management	Analysis
Data set one: <i>Document-as-text</i>	<i>New Directions for Early Childhood Education: Universal access to early learning for 4 year olds.</i> (Rudd & Macklin, 2007b)	Extracts of documents Leximancer© applied	<div style="text-align: center;">↑</div> Read as text Read and re-read transcripts Coding (see Appendix F: Start list of constructs)
Data set two: <i>Talk-as-text</i>	Focus groups with preservice teachers	Transcripts Leximancer© applied	Identifying Classifying Grouping Discourse analysis (Foucault, 1981, 1984a, 1984b, 1990a, 1990b, 1995; Sondergaard, 2002, 2005) Power/knowledge Intersections Regimes of truth Categories Ironic categories (Haraway, 2004; Rorty, 1989) <div style="text-align: center;">↓</div>

Data analysis for this thesis involved decisions about key pieces of data to focus on. Whilst there was an element of research subjectivity in these decisions, at the same time the design called for an approach that located a “thick slice” (Geertz, 1988), not a “closing chapter” (McArdle, 2001a, p. 113). The treatment of data could have been done with any body of data. There was no claim of a measurement and truth that was located.

The data analysis process commenced with compiling a “start list of constructs” (Lasky, 2005, p. 904) from the relevant literature. These initial discursive constructions were traced through the review of literature (see Appendix F). Additionally, the software program Leximancer©, was provided with “provocations” to view the data. The Leximancer-generated themes and concepts provided other starting points to analyse the data. This framework became a base from which to map onto other discourses were added as the data was read and re-read. This data analysis process whilst laborious, was at the same time enticing, as it opened possibilities for

new ways of seeing how early childhood teachers' professional identities are produced, particularly through a political document and preservice teachers voices.

In the first instance, each piece of data was subjected to the following sequence of steps:

- Start list of constructs drawn from the literature (Lasky, 2005):
- Audio transcribing of focus group interviews;
- First pass of full data sets;
- Reading and re-reading of data;
- Locating initial discourses (coloured post-it notes were used to mark the text);
- Applying Leximancer© and examining concept maps; and
- Reducing data.

Following that sequence, after this point the process for analysis was more rhizomatic:

- Excerpts of the focus group interview transcripts were marked/coded:
- Excerpts from the document were marked/coded;
- Key slices of data were identified;
- Key word searches were conducted on data (e.g., ECEC, EY, EC, ECE) to explore common language;
- Data was read against the tool box of discourses/discursive practices; power/knowledge; regimes of truth; resistance; gender and identities; performativity and investment in identities;
- Data was read against questions informed by Sondergaard (2005) (see earlier in Section 4.6.3);
- Mapping of discourses; and
- A further step for focus group data identified ironic categories by reading seemingly opposing discourses together.

The treatment of each data set was similar, however given the different means through which the data were drawn each warranted distinct tools for analysis. The political document required different tools from the focus group interviews. These particular considerations are outlined in the following sections.

Data analysis: document-as-text

Readings of the document were thorough and meticulous as “textual analysis depends on very detailed data analysis” (Silverman, 2009, p. 55). Working with one core document was consistent with Silverman’s guideline that in such fine-grained analysis it is best to work with a “limited body of data” (p. 55). The document works as a prescriptive text (Foucault, 1972/1989) and illuminates how early childhood teachers are positioned. In order to engage in this process, the document was read with reference to the theoretical framework, and also with other documents that were produced either side. This was not a claim to capture everything that was occurring at the time, nor has occurred since in the early years in Australia. The document is a “moment of arising” (Foucault, 1984a, p. 83) and as such was developed at the point in time in which it was enabled to emerge. This places significance on what was occurring at the time; what discourses were in play, and they worked to produce early childhood teachers’ professional identities. The selection of this document was based on current information that provides one snapshot of early childhood, including key political shifts.

The document, *New Directions*, was read as text, and examined for discourses in circulation at the time when the early childhood landscape was being disrupted. The mapping process involved the identification of some of the taken for granted assumptions that work to produce discursive rules or regimes of truth. The chapter redescribes the document, through an examination of the “discursive surface” (Kendall & Wickham, 1999, p. 37). Through this genealogical approach, there is no claim to refer to the “will of the authors” (Foucault, 1991, p. 59), though to produce “the description of an archive” (p. 59). A genealogy enables the location of contradictions, reversals and minute deviations (Foucault, 1984a) that work to constitute the early childhood professional. *New Directions* was selected for scrutiny as an important development, as an “event” at a particular moment in time that would go some way to addressing the key research question: How are the professional identities of early childhood teachers currently produced? In reading “against the

grain” (Popkewitz, 2000, p. 20), it was necessary to consider firstly, the immediate discursive conditions of possibility that allowed the event, *New Directions*, to occur. Secondly, consideration was given to how the early childhood teacher is constituted in Australia as a result of this event. This redescription of the document directs attention to one site, *New Directions*, for examining the discursive production of early childhood teacher professional identities.

The genealogical approach to the document-as-text data analysis was written in the present tense. This reflects a deliberate choice and acknowledged as a political act because it implies “political choice” (Meadmore et al., 2000, p. 474). The tense “suggests the descriptive role of genealogy”, which situates the discourses as “one attempt to claim to speak the truth” (Meadmore et al., 2000, p. 474). By using the present tense, the data is presented not as an established truth, but as becoming, or in other words, as one reading, my reading, of the discursive practices that shape early childhood teacher identities.

The document-as-text data is presented in Chapter 5.

Data analysis: talk-as-text

Data from all focus groups was coded and transcribed and listened to again, and again, a strategy suggested by Silverman (2001) to “reveal previously unnoted recurring features of the organization of talk” (p. 164). The initial transcribing was carried out by a company that specialises in transcription. This first draft of the transcription was the basis for careful editing and clarification that involved listening to each focus group discussion multiple times (an extract of a focus group transcript is included as Appendix I). The coding enabled locations of possible discourses in play (see Appendix G for the preliminary coding used for the focus group data). The patterns, repetitions, self-corrections, dissensus, uneasy moments and contradictions, points of agreement and events were examined (see Appendix H for an example of focus group analysis). This process involved multiple readings, and required going back and forth across the focus groups. Connections were made with the literature (see Chapter 2). For example, key concepts around education and care were read in the focus groups, and thus, connected with what the experts are saying. Links were also made with the theoretical framework (see Chapter 3) for this study, with key ideas around discourse, regimes of truth and identities located.

Through the preservice teachers' talk, discourses that work to produce the early childhood teacher were located. This was not a neat, linear process. By reading the data for "uneasy moments" (Luke & Gore, 1992, p. ix) contradictions, contestations, contingencies, reversals, resistance or ironies were located. Throughout the talk, there were contradictions, contingencies, reversals and ironies. The discourses that were read in the talk-as-text enabled readings of the data, through which emerge ironic categories of being an early childhood teacher. In this, and the following data chapter, the talk-as-text is subjected to a redescription of the preservice teacher focus groups, as a site, and examined for the discussion production of early childhood teacher professional identities. As preservice teachers are "becoming" (Caldwell, 2007) early childhood teachers, there are particular discourses available to them. These discourses compete and collide to produce regimes of truth about what can be said, and what cannot. The available discourses make permissible ways of "speaking into existence" (Sondergaard, 2002) the professional identities of early childhood teacher. This method applied was to identify, trace and locate the discourses that were read in the preservice teachers' talk.

The treatment of the talk-as-text data continues the process of *redescription*, and draws on the conceptual tool of *irony* (Haraway, 1991; Rorty, 1989). Irony is a valuable rhetorical device to consider the intersections of discourses. At the points where discourses intersect, compete and collide, new, ironic possibilities (Rorty, 1989) for professional identities arise. Contradictions, contingencies and ironies were read, as the preservice teachers attempted to hold together seemingly opposing discourses. A poststructuralist reading of these discourses allowed seemingly opposing terms to be held together in tension. As explained in the methodology chapter, Chapter 4, this is not a matter of the preservice teachers replacing one discourse with the other, rather both are necessary and both are true (Haraway, 1991). This treatment of the data is consistent with the theoretical frame where complexity, and messiness, is part of, not other to, the production of identities.

In the readings of the focus group data, a number of discourses were located. Of these, some were read as more dominant than others. There were three methods for determining the dominance of certain discourses: first, their frequency; second, how they were spoken and what was discursively sayable and unsayable; and third, how they enabled identities to be produced.

The data analysis approach for the talk-as-text is written in past tense. Irony is a valuable rhetorical device to consider the intersections of discourses. At the points where discourses intersect, compete and collide, new, ironic possibilities (Rorty, 1989) for professional identities arise. Contradictions, contingencies and ironies were read, as the preservice teachers attempted to hold together seemingly opposing discourses. A poststructuralist reading of these discourses allowed seemingly opposing terms to be held together in tension. As explained in the methodology chapter, Chapter 4, this is not a matter of the preservice teachers replacing one discourse with the other, rather both are necessary and both are true (Haraway, 1991). This treatment of the data is consistent with the theoretical frame where complexity, and messiness, is part of, not other to, the production of identities.

In looking to how professional identities of early teachers were produced through the focus groups, questions were asked of the data that were informed by Sondergaard's (2002) approach to discourse analysis: How is the early childhood teacher spoken into existence? Through which discursive processes does she emerge?

Multiple readings of the talk-as-text data enabled discursive traces to be mapped, as through their talk the preservice teachers produced early childhood teacher professional identities. A number of techniques were used to develop the conceptual framework this, and the following talk-as-text data chapters. First, a "start list of constructs" (see Appendix F) were developed from the view of literature and used as framework to read the transcripts. Next, readings, and re-readings, of the focus group transcripts enabled familiarity with the data. This process involved listening to the audio, against the transcript, and thus checking the accuracy of the transcribed talk. A process of coding the data using key discourses was used. This list of discourses was distilled through multiple readings of the data. Neuroscience was located as dominant in the data, and thus was included as key. Also useful in these preliminary readings of the talk-as-text data was locating the data within the context of the focus group questions.

The talk-as-text data is analysed and presented in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7.

4.6.4 Producing the subject

There was a focus in the data analysis on deconstructing and reconstructing discourses that came together to produce identities. By working from the basis that “we construct our subjectivities and the world as we see it through the discourses we perceive available to us” possibilities are opened to “deconstruct and reconstruct these discourses” (Sumsion, 2005, p. 196). I was interested in locating and mapping two things: first, some of the discourses that enabled the subject/identities in early childhood to be produced, and second, how these discourses were spoken into existence.

It has been outlined earlier in this chapter that discourses work as “historically specific practices” that produce “domination over Others” (Walkerdine, 1993, p. 452). This orientation leads to the examination of “more than words”, more than the semantics and structure of language. It is such a treatment of the data focuses on the “production of subjects” (Walkerdine, 1993, p. 456). By looking to the discourses that work to produce child care, it does not reduce it to relativism, but look to “power”, the “object of domination” (Walkerdine, 1993, p. 456) of identities?

4.6.5 Disrupting binaries

One approach to locating discourses was to locate instances where binary logic was being applied in the data, and then to disrupt these by “troubling” the data. These were read as indications of “spaces” in the data where two seemingly opposing terms could be brought together and produce particular ways of being an early childhood teacher. These troubles were treated as provocations to question practices and make visible the discourses at work, rather than spaces in which truth resided:

A discourse analysis does not capture the truth about that discourse’s object, but captures rather how the discourse re-presents its object. (Gottlieb, 1989, p. 133)

The spaces between and across discourses go beyond a binary and there is sometimes a “leaky” distinction between opposing terms (Haraway, 1991, p. 151). Binary thinking in the data was disrupted by considering the “possibility of *thinking* opposites together” (McArdle & McWilliam, 2005, p. 2). Instead of two opposing terms being either/or, the use of the word “and” holds them together in tension. For example, child care is good and bad. Examples of situations in which the participants

or the document appeared to be working in the space in between these binaries were located. Here, it was possible to think differently about the discursive constitution of early childhood teachers' professional identities.

When “dualistic thinking” is challenged and the assumption of “one right answer for every question” is refused (Moss, 2005, p. 415), questions about issues such as whether child care is good or bad are rejected. Instead, there is recognition of the issue's inherent complexity and awareness of the possibility that child care might be both good and bad.

4.6.6 Categories

Next, in order to reduce the data for analysis, the development and application of categories were built on a poststructuralist theoretical framework. Categories were devised as a framework to view the data, and to locate, cluster, and categorize discursive practices within these. Foucault (1990b) resisted identity categories as it conveyed a sense that identities were located in a particular way of being. The use of categories as a tool for analysis in this thesis was not applied in the sense of universal categories that suggest there is an “essence” and that the subject exists in “unchanged form” in all times and places (O'Farrell, n.d.). Such an approach would work against the conception of identities as fluid, and emerging and re-emerging at historical points in time. Lather (2000) prefers the use of “unfixing categories” that work to produce “difference instead of the same” (p. 16). At the same time, new categories can be devised as a means to challenge normalisations and dominant ways of thinking. For example, McArdle (2001a) challenged the normalised categories of teaching art “properly” in order to make a space for thinking otherwise, and in doing so opens up “games of truth” (Foucault, 1990b, p. 9) to re-consider what it means to teach properly. She replaces universal and established categories with “ironic categories” that worked to disrupt taken for granted assumptions (see discussion that follows, Section 4.6.7). Categories therefore became a useful data analysis tool to think otherwise about identities.

Category-maintenance (Davies, 2004/2006) is a continual process because categories are discursively established and re-established. Categories are not fixed and emerge through the intersections of discourses that are at play. Davies (2004/2006) offers that category maintenance work is “part of the hard work that

individual subjects engage in to separate themselves out into the binary category to which they have been assigned” (p. 67). As an example, the qualified early childhood teacher in child care is produced as a “teacher”, and assigned status and importance. This category is spoken as separate to the category of “carer”, who may hold a different qualification. In this “expulsion of the other” (p. 67) an apparent binary is set up, through a process the Davies describes as “abjecting” (p. 67). For early childhood teachers to identify within a category of teacher there is a simultaneous abjection to what does not fit in this category—an unqualified teacher for instance. The identities of the early childhood teacher produced through multiple categories that are established, and re-established through discourses.

Foucault’s (1982, 1990b) concept of identities being historically constituted through the discourses available at a point in time it was important to put these “categories in crisis ... to help ... see how such categories work across time and what they exclude” (Lather, 2008, p. 189). For example, the early childhood teacher as “educator” and the early childhood teacher as “worthy of status” are constructions that are produced through discourses of neuroscience/investment/economics. At another time, they may be constituted through different competing discourses.

4.6.7 Irony as a rhetorical tool

One way through which it was possible to look differently at early childhood teachers’ professional identities was draw on the tool of irony. Irony is useful in resisting absolute truths (Rorty, 1989) and disrupting boundaries. An ironist is “always aware of the contingency and fragility of their final vocabularies” (Rorty, 1989, p. 73). This resistance to words as being a truth opens a space to think together binaries, where both are possible, and both are true. Irony resists the choice of one or the other being right, where opposites are held together in tension. The space between these opposites, between the binary, becomes a place to rethinking and unsettling of dominant ways of thinking and being, in the case of my research, an early childhood teacher.

Irony is “about contradictions that do not resolve into larger wholes” (Haraway, 1991), where there is no resolution, and no settling of an agreed truth. As a “rhetorical strategy” (Haraway, 1991, p. 149) irony enables questions to be posed that do not require answers, and at the same time provoke other ways of thinking. To

work with irony, and to read this in the data, is “serious play” (Haraway, 1991, p. 149), involving “humour” (p. 149). The ironies in the data provided points to think differently about the data, and engage in analysis that brought together the binaries and dualisms. This is an approach that is not about one of the sides needing to be discarded and replaced. However, it about possibilities that are held together when “both terms are necessary and both are true” (Haraway, 1991, p. 152). For example, in the document early childhood teachers were constituted as “carers” through discourses of care/nurturance. At the same time identities were produced as custodians of important investments—children, and thus produced as “investors”.

The use of irony in data analysis opens up the possibilities for a “re-description” (Rorty, 1989, p. 9). Rorty’s re-description is useful in resisting a logical, linear case to account for why it is so, that in the case of this inquiry that work in child care is spoken. The use of irony “unsettles the rules” (McArdle, 2001b, p. 298) of “being” a professional early childhood teacher. An example lies in the often asked question: Why do early childhood teachers choose not to work in child care? A logical and linear response may be that it is because of the pay and conditions. Such a response provides neat answers. However, this thesis suggests that there are other more messy and complex possibilities. An ironic response to the same question might be to draw attention to more messy and complex possibilities, such as: What is an early childhood teacher?

As a method, redescription involves describing “lots and lots of things in new ways until you have created a pattern of linguistic behaviour which will tempt the new generation to adopt it” (Rorty, 1989, p. 9). This tool is drawn on as a “process of coming to see other human beings as “one of us” rather than “them” is a matter of detailed description of what unfamiliar people are like and of redescription of what we ourselves are like” (p. xvi). This opens possibilities for re-considering the discursive production of identities, enabling multiple possibilities to be “not what we are; we are who we can become” (Caldwell, 2007, p. 782). Early childhood teachers are shaped through multiple discourses that circulate and constitute their identities.

4.6.8 My position within the research

As a researcher, I bring to this study my own professional experiences. My identities, what I bring to this research, have affected the ways in which I engaged

with the data, in different ways, through the multiple readings. My own subjectivities have, as Osgood (2012, p. 35) acknowledges, “inevitably shaped my approach to the data”. In putting this up front it has compelled me to “question interpretations of the data” and then to “revisit the transcripts again and again” not in an attempt to find a truth or real meaning, though to “establish the precise reading I was making” (p. 35). This focus on meaning making enticed me to be meticulous about the meaning I was making from the data, and identities that I was locating.

I brought multiple identities to this research, partially produced through the different early childhood contexts in which I have worked. Experiences as a primary school and kindergarten teacher have provided immersion in education systems in both state and private schools. Work in child care as a Director of a dual-operation child care and kindergarten has also shaped my identities and the position/s I take in this study. More recently, my experiences in teacher education shape the ways in which I am situated. I bring to this inquiry a long standing interest in professionalism and leadership in child care, and preparing quality teachers.

Poststructuralist orientation to research resists a claim that research is neutral (Lather, 2000). I do not come to this research as a naive, though through the systems of checks and balances that have been put in place, and also because of the theoretical framework, it is possible for my interests to be brought to bear. As a researcher, I wanted to “stay close to and analyse the data”, without “preconceptions” about what would be “discovered” (MacNaughton & Rolfe, 2001, p. 12). I situated myself as researcher, clearly within the data, with acknowledgement that my readings are not a truth, but one of multiple ways of reading the data or discourses.

I was most interested in the subtleties and nuances that may act as provocations for seeing early childhood teachers’ professional identities in new ways.

4.7 RIGOUR: AUTHENTICITY AND INTEGRITY

Arguments over the validity and rigour of poststructuralist research methods have been comprehensively addressed in recent years (Alvesson, 2002; Lather, 2006; Lather & Moss, 2005). A “research binary” of evidence-based quantitative research and the “softer” qualitative research has been an ongoing debate in education research. Lather (2006) notes the “rage for accountability” (p. 784) in educational

research and relates this to the “scientificity” (p. 784) of research. Lather (2006) encourages a broader definition of science, not limited to traditional notions of rigour and objectivity. A fuzzying of lines between the binary of quantitative and qualitative and science or not science opens research possibilities and opportunities.

Research generalisability is often addressed in qualitative research through sampling procedures (Silverman, 2001, 2009). In this study, generalisability is enabled through the detail provided and the method of analysis. The level of detail provided in the texts, both the document and transcripts of focus groups, provide an appropriate basis for rich data analysis. The reading and re-reading of data identify discourses, discursive practices and categories. The discursive practices that emerge through data analysis inform and “build theories” (Silverman, 2009, p. 103) about professional identities. These theories are identified as enabling research generalisability, and therefore have “wider resonance” (Mason, 1996, p. 6). The reach of this research has potential to extend to preservice teachers, teacher educators, policy makers, and practitioners within the field of early childhood.

Guba and Lincoln (2005, p. 205) suggest that research validity requires consideration of both method and interpretation. This study, as a poststructuralist study, makes no suggestion of a truth or the “ultimate knowledge” (Guba & Lincoln, p. 205), often the desired outcome of modernist and quantitative research. Validation is a useful concept to consider in poststructuralist research and in this study is considered as analysis “crystalline” (Richardson, 1997, p. 92). An imaginary for validity is proposed that is “not the triangle- a rigid, fixed, two-dimensional object” rather a “crystal, which combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensionalities, and angles of approach” (p. 92). This consideration of validation as crystalline or rhizomatic is in keeping with the poststructuralist research paradigm, and therefore provides an appropriate fit within this study.

I met with the external moderator on two occasions, prior to the focus groups being conducted. This first meeting, provided an opportunity to develop a relationship and see if her interview style would be a good fit with my approach to research. At this initial meeting, I broadly outlined the research focus and what her role would be as the moderator of the focus group. With previous experience as a focus group moderator, she was well positioned to engage in this role. At another

subsequent meeting I explained each of the interview questions, and together we trialled the technology to ensure the focus group would be recorded.

To further support research rigour and authenticity of data collection, the moderator was provided limited background information on the study and the child care field studies unit.

4.8 RESEARCH ETHICS

This project was completed through the guidance on ethical conduct of research, obtained from the *Queensland University of Technology Ethics Manual* (University of Human Research Ethics Committee, 2004), from the Faculty Ethics Advisor and from the Office of Research. This study qualified for Level 1 (Low risk) clearance, as there were no anticipated risks beyond everyday living for the research participants. Appropriate ethical clearance forms were approved by the University Human Research Ethics Committee (the human ethics approval certificate is included as Appendix K). Additionally, this research was conducted in accordance with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research involving Humans* (National Health and Medical Research Council [NHMRC], 1999) principles of integrity, respect for persons (and groups), beneficence, and justice.

Informed consent was obtained from the participants in the focus groups (Cannold, 2001; Glesne, 2006). An invitation was extended to potential participants, and their choice to participate was voluntary. The verbal explanation of the study together with written information provided participants with background information on the study and details about how the focus groups would be carried out. Written consent was obtained from each of the group members prior to the focus group interviews commencing. The written consent information provided participants with the option to withdraw from the focus group, or from the study at any time, should they wish to do so (Glesne, 2006; Silverman, 2009). All participants continued with their participation in the focus group, and there were no requests to withdraw from the study (see Appendix J for the participant and consent information).

All preservice teachers in attendance in this first week formed into groups. The group activity was explained, along with my research focus, and invitation for one group to participate in a focus group experience. I provided all students written information about the research project, as well as time, as a group, to discuss their

willingness to participate (in the focus group). The documentation I provided also outlined a key condition: full consensus of the group was necessary if it was to participate. Further, I explained that all students would have the opportunity to engage in the focus group questions, though only one group would be part of the data collection for my research. I needed to be mindful that in my role of unit co-ordinator, that students did not feel advantaged or disadvantaged through their participation, so I made it clear that there was no incentive for participating in the focus group.

As outlined previously (see Section 4.6.2) the focus groups were conducted by an external moderator. Although I was not present within the focus groups, this did not negate my role as the researcher in this study. In addition, I was aware that because I “enact[ed] and participate[d] in relationships of power, there can be no research neutrality” (Grieshaber, 2001, p. 139). The decision to use a moderator to conduct the research was influenced by my role as the unit co-ordinator. This put me in a position of power due to my responsibility to grade assessment tasks. I also had a pre-existing relationship with the students and wanted their responses to be as uninhibited as possible (Morrison-Beedy et al., 2001; Silverman, 2009). That said, they were aware that I would be listening to the focus group audio recordings.

4.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapters 3 and 4 have worked together to formulate the theoretical and methodological architecture for this thesis. Chapter 3 outlined the theoretical framework that underpinned the research. Poststructuralist theory positions professional identities as “messy”, contingent and continually emerging, and provide the orientation to analysing the data sets. Foucault’s work on discourse, power/knowledge, regimes of truth and resistance were drawn on as key tools to read the data (Foucault, 1980a, 1981), as were notions of identity, investment, gender, performativity and categories (Butler, 1997, 2008; McNay, 1992; Walkerdine, 1990; Weedon, 1997). Chapter 4 outlined the methodology, which is based on Foucauldian-informed discourse analysis, as well as the approach to data construction and data analysis. The following three chapters focus on data analysis: Producing professional identities through document-as-text: *New Directions* document (Chapter 5); Producing early childhood professional identities through talk-as-text: preservice teachers (Part 1) (Chapter 6); and Producing early childhood

teacher professional identities through talk-as-text: preservice teachers (Part 2) (Chapter 7). These three data chapters, together with the study's conclusions (Chapter 8), go some way to address the fourth research sub-question: What new understandings emerge from new readings of the discursive construction of early childhood teachers' professional identities? (see Chapter 1, Section 1.2).

Chapter 5: Producing Early Childhood Teacher Professional Identities Through Document-as-Text: *New Directions*

Chapter 5 focuses on the analysis of the document *New Directions in Early Childhood Education: Universal access to early learning for 4 year olds* (Rudd & Macklin, 2007b), referred to in this thesis as *New Directions*. It is one of a number of policy and political documents that have emerged in recent years and highlighted the importance of early childhood. In Australia, political documents have argued a case to reshape early childhood, including reform of the early years workforce. *New Directions* was put forward by the federal ALP when it was in opposition. This document proposes changes that are considered necessary for early childhood, and more broadly, for the country. For this research on early childhood professional identities, *New Directions* was read as a “moment of arising” (Foucault, 1984a, p. 83). The document propelled early childhood into prominence in the Australian political landscape and reflected a broader international focus (OECD, 2006; UNESCO, 2006). As part of an education revolution, early childhood was positioned within competing and colliding discourses. These discursive conditions produced a new profile for the early childhood field and for early childhood teachers.

In this chapter *New Directions* is read as text. It is examined for discourses in circulation at a time when the early childhood landscape was being disrupted. The data analysis process involved the identification of some of the taken-for-granted assumptions that work to produce discursive rules or regimes of truth. This chapter redescribes the document through an examination of the “discursive surface” (Kendall & Wickham, 1999, p. 37). According to this genealogical approach, there is no claim to refer to the “will of the authors” (Foucault, 1991, p. 59), though to produce “the description of an archive” (p. 59). A genealogy enables the location of contradictions, reversals and minute deviations (Foucault, 1984a) that work to constitute the early childhood professional. *New Directions* was selected for scrutiny because its publication was an important development, as an event at a particular moment in time that would to address the key research question: How are the professional identities of early childhood teachers currently produced? The

genealogical approach to the document-as-text data analysis is written in the present tense. This reflects a deliberate choice and is acknowledged as a political act because it implies “political choice” (Meadmore et al., 2000, p. 474). By using the present tense, the data is presented not as an established truth, but as becoming, or in other words, as one reading—my reading—of the discursive practices that shape early childhood teacher identities.

In reading “against the grain” (Popkewitz, 2000, p. 20), it was necessary to consider two factors: first, the immediate discursive conditions of possibility that allowed the event, *New Directions*, to occur; and second, how the early childhood teacher is constituted in Australia as a result of this event. This redescription of the document directs attention to one site, *New Directions*, for examining the discursive production of early childhood teacher professional identities. A second site is the talk of preservice teachers. In later data chapters, their talk is subjected to similar scrutiny, in an effort to find some of the discourses available to preservice teachers as they are becoming early childhood professionals. The *New Directions* document will be discussed first because of when it occurred.

Leximancer© was used on as a tool to manage the data, and provided a provocation for considering *New Directions*. Figure 5.1 presents a screenshot from Leximancer©. As explained in the methodology chapter, Chapter 4, Leximancer© was useful for managing data and for this preliminary overview of the data. It was not used to analyse the data because its function is not consistent with the discourse analysis approach applied in this research.

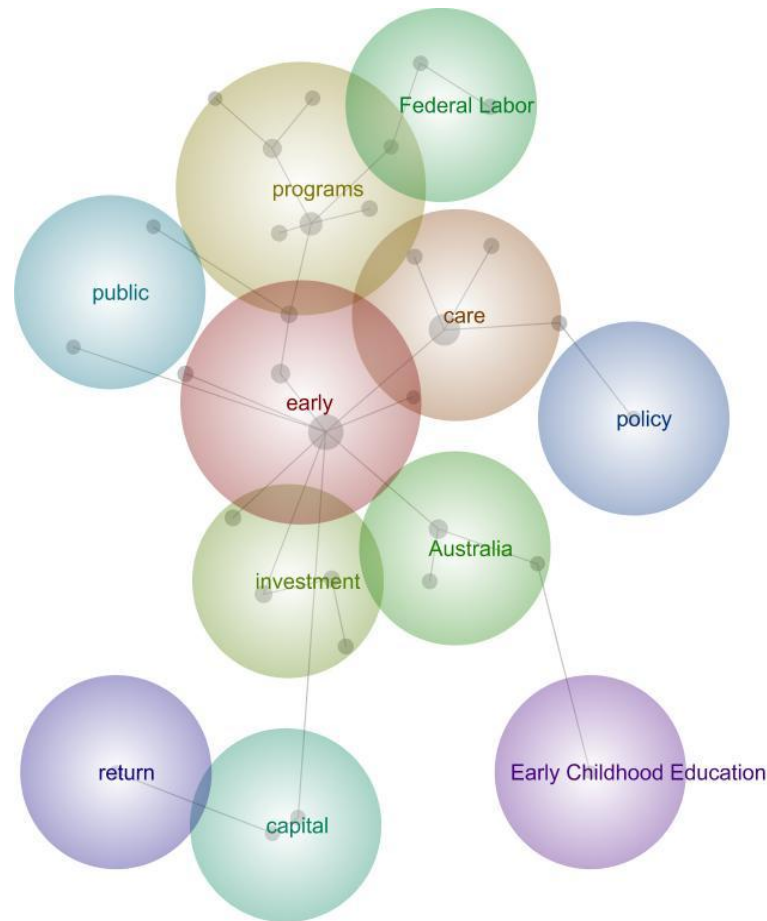


Figure 5.1. Leximancer© image for *New Directions*.

The image in Figure 5.1 captures the way in which the program distilled key themes in the data. The visual representation of the Leximancer©-generated themes denote how frequently the terms appeared in the document. The proximity of the circles to one another represents the closeness of these themes as they occurred in the data. The Leximancer© software located a number of possible dominant themes. Notable was the proximity of such terms as programs, early, care, and Federal Labor. Additionally, the situating of Early Childhood Education as separate to these themes was curious. There were also surprises in the frequencies of themes. For example, Leximancer © located investment as a frequent theme in the document and linked it to the other themes of return and capital. This representation was noted as an area to explore more closely in the data analysis. Another point earmarked for closer scrutiny was the graphical separation of three central elements: the phrase Early Childhood Education and the words early and care. Leximancer© thus generated points of interest that were used to inform data analysis of *New Directions*.

The reading of the document as a text provided a map of the terrain, surrounding the event, *New Directions*. First, the reading considered the visual/textual features of the document. This process located discourses that enabled how the early childhood teacher is spoken in the document. Second, each section of the document was considered, for the key content, the structure and the features of the text that produce early childhood teachers. Next, key discourses that emerged from this reading of the document were mapped and examined. As Foucault suggests, in this work, discourses are not treated as a “theme of reviving commentary, but as a monument to be described in its intrinsic configuration” (Foucault, 1991, p. 60). Such a conceptualisation of discourse allows for the tensions between discourses and does not require that they be resolved. Rather, the discourse, as a “set of conditions” (p. 54), makes it possible to produce the early childhood teacher “at a precise moment in time” (p. 54). In this section of the chapter, the ways through which the document produces early childhood teacher professional identities are considered. The different levels of analysis are undertaken to provide the context in which the document emerged (as a “moment of arising”) and the structural components of the document (as the text). The latter part of the chapter attends to a discursive analysis of the conditions of possibility that are read in *New Directions* that enabled early childhood, the early years and the early childhood professional to be constituted as thus.

5.1 NEW DIRECTIONS: A “MOMENT OF ARISING”

In January 2007, amid a federal election campaign in Australia, the topic of early childhood was catapulted onto the national agenda as part of the federal ALP’s education revolution policy. The education revolution comprised four components across a continuum of education sectors: early childhood, schools, higher education and vocational education and training (VET). Early childhood was clearly positioned as integral to the revolution. Around the same time as the release of *New Directions*, another sister-document was released: *The Australian Economy needs an education revolution: New Directions on the critical link between long term prosperity, productivity growth and human capital investment* (ALP, 2007). This document positioned education as “the most important economic policy issue for Labor at this year’s election” (Coorey, 2007). Thus, this represented an enhanced focus and a shift in education policy such that it was seen as a key player in the country’s economy.

Importantly for this study, the inclusion of early childhood education within a broader revolutionary education strategy was new. Prior to this, early childhood had been located within the human services and community fields; however, securing a place for early childhood services within the field of education reflected a conceptual shift in how early childhood was discursively positioned.

The proposition of putting early childhood with education included a series of innovations, including new structural arrangements for early childhood services, new curriculum, new quality measures for accountability, and, central to the reform, new qualification requirements. *New Directions* called for four-year degree-qualified teachers to work in before-school contexts, including child care, and this feature was read in this study as a “moment of arising” (Foucault, 1984a, p. 83), or a shift in the discursive terrain. Prior to this, a four-year degree was not required for child care workers; therefore, *New Directions* triggered a significant change in the rules that required the creation of a new definition of a professional child care worker.

On further forensic examination of the document, other important shifts were noted, for example, neuroscience was profiled and there was a focus on economics and investment in early childhood. Together, these discourses were read as shifts that produced new early childhood teacher professional identities.

5.1.1 Election 2007

In January 2007, the leader of the ALP, Kevin Rudd, conducted a series of travelling road shows, targeting small but selected audiences, and presenting a PowerPoint lecture called “Investing in ECEC—the science, the policy, the cost” (This seminar was briefly outlined in Chapter 1). At the time, the ALP had been in opposition for 11 years and part of the election platform was that Australia was ready for change. One of these presentations was held at the Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation (IHBI) at Queensland University of Technology (QUT) in Brisbane, Queensland (Rudd and Macklin, 2007c). Together with the opposition spokesperson for Families and Community Services, Jenny Macklin, Kevin Rudd spoke with great enthusiasm for a new way forward for early childhood. Central to this address were PowerPoint slides that provided evidence for an argument to invest in the early years. The two key discourses that shaped this presentation were brain research and the economic benefits of investing in the early years. As a participant in

the audience, I noted one slide in particular that drew audible gasps from the audience. It was a depiction of the expenditure in early years programs in Australia (see Figure 5.2) as compared with other OECD countries. The graph, taken from the report *Starting strong II: Early childhood education and care* (OECD, 2006) made powerful use of visual text as a device for representing complex information sharply and in a way that is accessible to the lay reader.

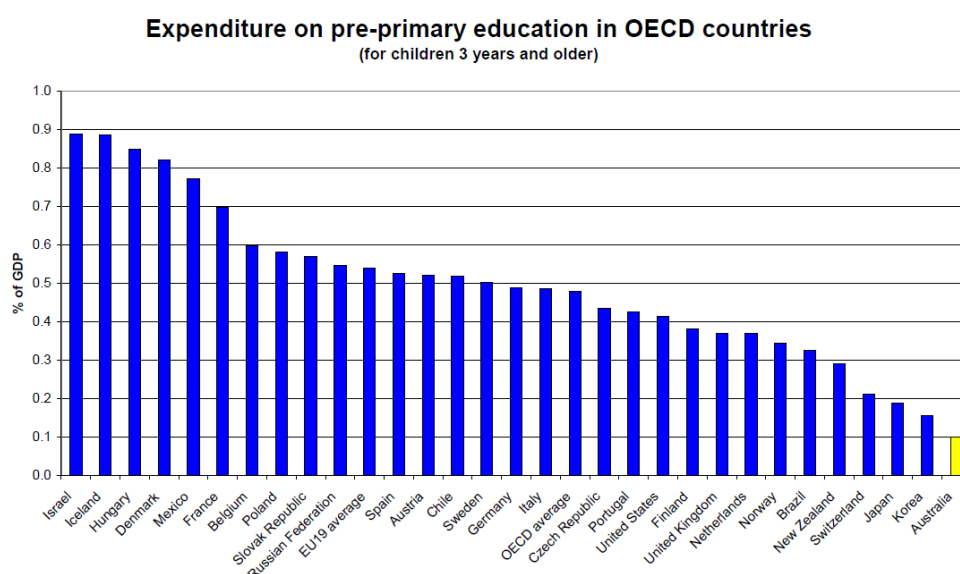


Table B2.1c OECD Education at a Glance 2006

Figure 5.2. Graphic shared at a seminar called Investing in ECEC – The science, the policy, the cost..
(Source: OECD, 2006, cited in Rudd & Macklin, 2007c)

In this presentation, spending in pre-primary education was linked directly to dire consequences for Australia's economy and its future. The description of Australia as being worthy of a "wooden spoon award" (Rudd & Macklin, 2007b) for coming last, positioned Australia competitively; people do not like to think of Australia as so far behind. Such sensationalism was a clever device to communicate complex, and potentially dry and boring, economic data in a humorous and compelling manner. The argument was persuasive and had the potential to galvanise people.

5.1.2 The political conditions for change: State–Commonwealth Government alignment

In November 2007, the ALP was voted into office with an overwhelming majority (Australian Electoral Commission [AEC], 2007). The landslide win,

together with the fact that the ALP was in government across each state and territory, provided a strong basis for expediting ALP policy reform in Australia.

Electoral promises were actioned in ways that otherwise may not have been possible (Goldfinch & Hart, 2003; Petry & Benoit, 2009), partially accounting for the rapid change in the early childhood sector that ensued in the years that followed the 2007 election. Thus, “governments across federal, state and local jurisdictions joined forces to ‘re-vision’ ECEC” (Tayler, 2011, p. 213). *New Directions* was the first of many policy documents that were generated, and contributed to early childhood in Australia. Examples of such documents include:

- *A national quality framework for early childhood education and care: A discussion paper* (COAG, 2008)
- *Early Childhood Education: Universal Access* (DEEWR, 2009b)
- *National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education* (COAG, 2009a)
- *Investing in the Early Years: A National Early Childhood Development Strategy* (COAG, 2009b)
- *National Early Years Workforce Strategy* (DEEWR, 2009c).

The proliferation of international, national and state documents that came before and after *New Directions* position it in a particular context (see Figure 5.3). These documents contain a number of discourses that link, meet, intersect and collide to produce early childhood and work in early childhood settings.



Figure 5.3. The emergence of *New Directions*.

New Directions was a significant document that was published and circulated at a time when specific discursive conditions existed. A genealogical approach will be used to undertake a reading and redescription of this document that will help to address the research question: How are professional identities of early childhood teachers produced and maintained through the discourses that are accessible?

5.2 THE TEXT

New Directions is a 16-page document that was made available in two forms: as a hard copy and as a digital file that could be downloaded by anyone from the ALP website. The document includes a colour cover, with title and graphics (see Figure 5.4), followed by a one-page executive summary. The following 13 pages are divided into two sections: the first section (seven pages) is “Early learning: The start of an education revolution”, the second section (six pages) is “Early childhood education: New directions for Australia”, and the final page is another summary, “Labor’s New Directions for Early Childhood Education: A policy snapshot”.

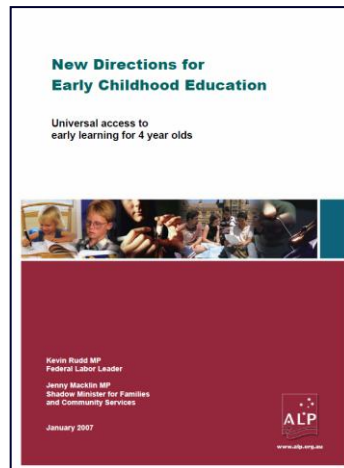


Figure 5.4. Front cover of *New Directions*.

The document does not have a table of contents. Three levels of headings within each of the two sections provide the document structure. For the purposes of this analysis, it was useful to develop a table of contents to provide a framework for the document. Table 5.1 is a table of contents that I generated for *New Directions*, developed from the headings used in the document. This provides, at a glance, an overview of the document's contents and emphases, including the number of pages for each section.

Table 5.1

Table of Contents Generated for New Directions

Heading	Page numbers
Executive Summary	2
Early Learning: the Start of an Education Revolution	3–9
Early learning helps build economic prosperity	3–7
Australia needs an education revolution	7–9
Early Childhood Education: New Directions for Australia	10–15
Our Goal: Making early learning a right for all Australian children	10–12
How the universal right would work	11
How the expansion of services will be funded	11–12
National Early Years Learning Framework	12
Early Childhood Workforce Strategy	13–14
Extra university places	13
HECS relief for early childhood teachers	13
No TAFE fees for childcare trainees	13

Building our early learning infrastructure	14
A national government focused on early learning and care	14
A new Commonwealth–State agenda for Early Childhood	15
Labor’s New Directions for Early Childhood Education: A Policy Snapshot	16

A preliminary visual analysis of *New Directions* provides a foreground to the location and mapping of discourses in the document. The visual analysis of the document represents particular ways in which meaning is made of the document genre (Emmison, 2004). This visual analysis of the document, including the layout, text and graphics, provides insight into the “stylistic genre” (Winslett, 2010, p. 93) that assigns particular importance and authority. The cover, textual features and images are consistent with a policy document that is a “hybrid with elements of policy genre interwoven with party political, even promotional, material” (Taylor, 2004, p. 7). The genre of the document is similar to other government documents; therefore, by association, *New Directions* claims the same authority, even though it was developed by a political party not in office.

At first glance at the sections and parts of the document, some were lengthier, and thus, were assigned more importance. Section one, called “Early learning: The start of an education revolution”, contains the two longest parts of the document at roughly three pages each: “Early learning helps build economic prosperity” (pp. 2–6) and “Australia needs an education revolution” (pp. 7–9). Three pages equates to about 25% of the total number of pages of text if you exclude the cover, executive summary and the final policy snapshot.

The layout of the document is a combination of text (paragraphs, dot points) and graphics (tables, graphs). Most pages include references as footnotes, signalling the research and evidence that was drawn on. On two of the pages, pages 5 and 6, the reference list appears as footnotes and takes up a quarter of the page. This visually presents a significant body of evidence that provides authority to the claims in the document. Visuals, graphs and tables are included on pages 5, 6 and 7, and break up the text. Paragraphs throughout the document are short in length (between 2 and 9 lines) and dot points are used. These textual features mean that the reader is not challenged to read lengthy passages of text.

5.2.1 The cover

The first point of interest for analysis of a document-as-text is the front cover. The document's cover includes the title; the authors— Kevin Rudd MP, the federal ALP leader, and Jenny Macklin MP, opposition spokesperson for Families and Community Services; and graphics in the form of the ALP logo and photographic images.

The interconnected images on the front cover depict five people. The first image is of a young child (possibly a four-year-old, aligning with the title “Universal access to early learning for 4 year olds”). The photographs then read left to right show people (both males and females) in ascending age. The images are relatively homogeneous. The children, for instance, are white, fair-haired, and appear well groomed and cared for.

Each image depicts a person engaged in learning (for example, the child appears to be reading, an adolescent appears to be conducting a science experiment, a group of people are in a university courtyard, and so on). The photos are displayed sequentially, in a linear, predictable way, starting with a young child and moving through approximate ages. Such logic works to position the early years at the beginning of series of stages of development, which reflects child development theory (Berk, 2009). The series of photos is of children/people in different educational contexts—before school, primary school, secondary school and university. The final image appears to portray the workforce. The visuals position children on a lifelong journey—a developmental pathway where the focus is on who they will become. The message is that through education and the skills that children will develop, they will eventually contribute to the country's economy. This production of children as a concept, in turn, produces professional identities for early childhood teachers.

The images used to depict a new direction for early childhood were chosen deliberately. There could have been, for instance, five pictures of children from different contexts, homes and cultures, and this would illustrate diversity and add weight to the part of the message about universality. Instead, the emphasis is on learning, development, economics and the future. It communicates a sense that teachers will be able provide, through children, the anticipated financial benefits for the country's economy.

Another notable feature on the cover is the branding used to represent the ALP, which would not typically appear on policy documents produced by a party in office. The party logo, which includes the Southern Cross and the ALP colours, deep red and blue, clearly identifies the policy as a political document. .

The title of the document, *New Directions for Early Childhood Education: Universal access for early learning for 4 year olds*, is in two parts, and works to signal a new way forward for early childhood. New directions come first and communicates the idea that early childhood education is about to take a different route. It is important to note that the word care is not included in the title, which is not consistent with the standard focus in the field of early childhood to bring together education and care (see, for example, OECD, 2001, 2006; UNESCO, 2006; also refer to discussion in Chapter 2, Section 2.1.1).

The second part of the title is *Universal access for early learning for 4 year olds*. The term universal access indicates a concern for equity and social justice, which are central ALP values (ALP, 2012). This orientation is consistent with ongoing calls for early childhood programs to focus on access and affordability (OECD, 2006; Press, 2009). Next, the term early learning signposts the intention to focus on learning and education. The use of the term early learning is chosen over discourses of “play” and “care” that shape understandings of young children and the work done in early childhood contexts (Grieshaber & McArdle, 2010; Osgood, 2012; Page, 2011). In *New Directions*, there is recognition that children learn from an early age. The final part of the document title indicates the exclusive focus on four-year-old children; this focus beckons a developmental discourse that makes age important and indicates that the initiative is about the year prior to school entry — not younger children, birth to three years.

The *New Directions* cover, title and images all combine to signify change. The document positions early childhood professionals as part of the education focus on four-year-old children: these professionals must provide early learning universally to this age group to start the march to progress and prosperity.

5.2.2 Key sections of document

Executive Summary

The one-page executive summary (p. 2) works as “a framework for understanding the key ideas” (Hatcher, 1997, p. 111). An introductory paragraph builds an argument for why “Australia needs an education revolution”. Reference to “international research” assigns importance and authority to claims to invest in the early years. A preliminary “fly over” of this six-line paragraph indicates prominence of the words investing/investment (appears 3 times) and economy (appears 2 times). Other terms in this paragraph shape the tone for the document: “higher rate of return”, “future prosperity”, and “new world economy”. The words child/children and the terms early childhood and early years are not included. Given the document’s focus on early childhood education, the absence of the words child and children in this section is worth noting.

The executive summary (p. 2) also includes a bulleted list that purportedly outlines how the federal ALP, the organisation that published the document, would meet these challenges. This nine-point list is prefaced with “learning begins, in the early years”. The use of the term early years with education sets another tone for the document, as does the list that includes broad objectives and election commitments, along with details about how the changes will be actioned. The nine points construct parameters for the policy. “Degree-qualified teachers” will be required to implement the early learning program across a “diversity of early childhood settings—public and private”. The focus will be on “quality” not “where it takes place”, broadening the scope of early childhood contexts to include child care.

Words and phrases peppered through the dot points denote approaches to early childhood education: “play-based”, “early learning”, “education”. Play-based learning, for example, is acknowledged in *New Directions* as the main mode of learning for four-year-olds, and it is discussed in connection with “development programs” that will be a “universal right” for all children in this age group.

The executive summary provides a broad framework for an education revolution that will include early childhood reform. Thus, the reader is encouraged to turn to the body of the document for fuller explanation of how these proposed

changes will be operationalised. The content of two important sections in *New Directions* is discussed next.

Section One: “Early Learning: the Start of an Education Revolution”

The first section of the document is a rationale for changes to the early childhood sector. This section is in three parts as shown in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2

Headings in First Section of New Directions

Heading	Page numbers
Introduction (no heading)	3
Early learning helps build economic prosperity	3–7
Australia needs an education revolution	7–9

A preliminary visual analysis of this section locates some of the features of the document layout. The text is mainly in paragraph form and narrative in style. The layout is punctuated with three large graphs and one table (each taking up approximately one-third of one page) and four dot points. Each of these graphics takes up approximately one-third of a page, and thus, attracts the reader’s attention. Approximately one-quarter of pages 4 and 5 is taken up with a list of references, once again, catching the eye of the reader. There is little white space in this section. The graphs, tables and references denote “evidence” and assign authority to the content of the document. Moreover, the inclusion of evidence is consistent with making an argument and provides a rationale for change—in this case “a revolution”.

The introduction to the first section of *New Directions* is narrative in style and draws on discourses of children’s rights and needs to build an argument for “nothing less than an education revolution” (p. 3). The opening paragraph of this first section is afforded particular scrutiny because it sets the tone for this section and the entire document. Unlike the executive summary, the word children is used twice: “All Australian children deserve the best start in life” and “If our children are to enjoy increases in their living standards...”. The text then rapidly turns to “government investment” so that children are able to “succeed in life”. The benefits are purported to be for children as well as “the wider community”. In addition, these broader benefits will achieve “educational attainment and labour force participation”. In the

space of four sentences, the tone moves from children, and a nod to their rights, to economics, workforce and “higher levels of productivity”.

There are other benefits gained from investing in early childhood, and the first paragraph continues to outline these. It is argued that investment will help to “tackle disadvantage, dependency on welfare, our hospitals and our criminal justice system” (p. 3). “Early childhood learning and care” are put forward as “a major part of meeting this challenge”. Moreover, it seems the “education revolution”, with early childhood as key, will to provide a way to circumvent economic burden.

Another notable feature of this first section of the document is the attention given to positioning Australia in “the global marketplace” (p. 3). There are two countries singled out as a threat in this phrase: “as China and India continue their transformation into economic superpowers”. Investment in education, including early childhood, will ensure that Australia will not become “China’s quarry and Japan’s beach”. Such logic aligns with a fear that Australia cannot be left behind, cannot be taken for granted and must invest in education to compete with other countries’ economies. Our economy, it seems, is fastened to education, and early childhood is produced as part of this reform.

It is not only economic fear that is generated through *New Directions*. Concern is raised about current levels of “educational attainment” (p. 3), and further reasons are given for promoting investment in education as “Australia falls short of both its competitors and its potential” (Rudd & Macklin, 2007b, p. 3). Such attention to education, including early childhood, will provide a “competitive advantage” that will position Australia as a leader, not a *lagger* when it comes to investment in the future of the country.

There are two headings in this first section of *New Directions* and each part is approximately three pages. The first part comes under the heading “Early learning helps build economic prosperity”, and positions “early learning” with “economic prosperity”. This signals yet a further shift for early childhood, with the skills developed in early childhood aligned with economics. Once again, the threat of other countries is raised: “more intense competitive forces in the Asia-Pacific region will require more internationally competitive businesses and a more productive workforce”. A fear of the economies of “competitors” produces a sense of urgency that something must be done to counter a threat of these economies. The claim is that

risk will be circumvented in the future through a “more productive workforce”, which, in the proposed “succession plan” refers to children.

The “commonsense logic” (p. 4) that early childhood is important is made even more compelling through the “evidence” that is drawn upon to make a case for investment. A quote from “Professor James Heckman, Nobel Laureate in Economic Sciences” (p. 4) provides authority for the argument to “invest in the very young” (p. 4). In addition to commonsense logic and the words from a Nobel Laureate, research from the United States is cited that quantifies “returns for every dollar spent” (p. 6). Reference is made to three targeted early intervention programs: The Perry Preschool Project, the Abecedarian Project and the Chicago Child-Parent Centres (Rudd & Macklin, 2007b, p. 5). These examples further demonstrate the benefits of investing in early childhood.

Further weight is added to the case to invest in early childhood through the inclusion of a table from a team of economists (Cunha et al., 2005, p. 101, as cited in Rudd & Macklin, 2007b). The graph visually represents the rate of investment return. Investment in “preschool” is shown as yielding a higher rate of return than investment in school, and post-school education. This graph was also included in the Rudd road-show presentation, referred to earlier in this chapter. The inclusion of this and two additional bar graphs functions as “evidence” to support the claim to invest in the early years. The “scientificity” (Lather, 2006) of these graphs represents authority and assigns power (Foucault, 1984b) to the argument.

The next part of this section “Australia needs an education revolution” (p. 7) made a further case for “investment” and contextualises this in the Australian setting. Once again, discourses of competing with other countries’ economies are drawn on to produce early childhood as important. Australia’s “very low level of investment”, apparently “weak by International standards”, does not bode well for the economy of the nation. Moreover, the stark contrast between government investment in “pre-primary education” at \$1 and “education” (presumably primary and secondary), generally at \$50, is put forward. The variance in investment is presented simply and in terms that a person not familiar with complex economic modelling would understand. It creates a sense of disbelief that such a significant difference in expenditure across education contexts could be the case, and thus, adds further weight to the need to change levels of investment in early childhood.

The first section of the document, “Early learning: the start of an education evolution”, makes an urgent case that the education revolution must happen now, or all will be lost. The revolution requires investment, and if this investment is made, the potential benefits to children and the economy are spoken as “immense”. Whilst children are one of the beneficiaries, it is the economy of the country that is set to prosper if these investments are made, through the education revolution. Such logic produces the early childhood teacher and her identities through the intersecting, competing and colliding discourses of investment, economics and competition. These discourses, and others, are interrogated in the second part of this chapter, though for now, the examination of *New Directions* continues with consideration of the second section of the document.

Section Two: “Early Childhood Education: New Directions for Australia”

The second section of the document outlined how the changes will be operationalised. The details for the new initiatives were outlined in five parts, with Table 5.3 capturing the key headings in this section.

Table 5.3

Headings in Second Section of New Directions

Heading	Page numbers
Introduction (no heading)	10
Our goal: Making early learning a right for all Australian children	10–12
How the universal right would work	11
How the expansion of services will be funded	11–12
National Early Years Learning Framework	12
Early Childhood Workforce Strategy	13
Extra university places	13
HECS relief for early childhood teachers	13
No TAFE fees for childcare trainees	13
Building our early learning infrastructure	14
A national government focused on early learning and care	14
A new Commonwealth–State agenda for Early Childhood	15

The textual features of this section include predominantly short paragraphs of no more than 10 lines. The text is broken up by 11 headings, with three heading levels. This is more than the previous section’s two headings, with two levels. There

are no diagrams, graphs or tables included. The text takes up the entire page, with no white space. There are two references included on the first page of the section, which together take up only four lines at the bottom of the page. Thus, this layout gives a sense that key evidence was provided in the previous section, and that this section is oriented to practical or operational elements of the education revolution in early childhood.

Each part of this section differs in length, with “Our goal” and “Early childhood workforce strategy” afforded the most space (42% and 50% of this section respectively; or 19% and 23% of the total number of pages of text). Each of these sections includes a number of sub-headings that work to break up the text and allow the reader to identify the main points at a glance.

The second section of *New Directions* commences with two stand-alone quotes that were published in 2006. The first quote is attributed to the UNESCO Global Monitoring Report Team: “First, political commitment at the highest level must expressly recognise that early childhood care and education is an economic and social priority” (2006, cited in Rudd & Macklin, 2007b, p. 10). This quote reaffirms the point made repeatedly in the first section of the document: early childhood is an economic concern and it is imperative that action is taken now. The second quote, is attributed to the OECD: “it seems important to ensure that early childhood services are part of a well conceptualised national policy” (2006, cited in Rudd & Macklin, 2007b, p. 10). A way to action early childhood reform is foreshadowed through this quote, and it includes a national, standardised approach. The authors of the quotes, UNESCO and OECD, are both high-profile international organisations that focus on economics and science and draw on evidence-based research to argue for change and growth in developed and developing countries.

The first paragraph of this section of the document places education and care together and reaffirms the political priority of the ALP to “put learning and development at the centre of Australia’s approach to early childhood education and care” (Rudd & Macklin, 2007b, p. 10). The phrase “learning and development” is given prominence, thus diminishing the origin of child care as a means for parents to participate in the paid workforce (Brennan, 1998; Press, 2009; Wong, 2007).

The text under the heading “Our Goal: Making early learning a right for all Australian children”, details how the proposed changes will be operationalised. A

number of goals are explained, including a “new Commonwealth Early Childhood Education Act” (Rudd & Macklin, 2007b, p. 10). Immediately under the heading, the first sentence qualifies that “all Australian children” will be “all Australian four year olds” (p. 10). Children younger than four are again excluded, however, an important new idea is introduced: “learning and care” programs will be offered through different early childhood contexts—“preschools, kindergartens or as specific programs in existing childcare providers” (p. 11). This marks a departure from kindergarten/ preschool for four-year-olds in the year prior to school entry because of the context in which education and learning occurs. Now, through this new regime of truth, it is permissible that education and learning may also occur in child care.

The policy’s focus on “how the universal right will work” (p. 11) incorporates information about the proposed sites for the “early learning program”, which includes preschool, kindergarten and child care (both private and community-based). One reason provided for the inclusion of child care in the universal preschool program is the fear of working families that their children “will miss out on opportunities to learn in the year before school” if they access child care and not preschool. Family day care is also put forward as an option for the “development and implementation of early childhood learning programs”.

The implementation of new structural arrangements for the delivery of the universal preschool program will require time to “plan for the new infrastructure” (p. 12). Here, for the first time in the main body of the document (not the executive summary), the word “workforce” (p. 12) appears. Under the proposed changes, each state and territory will be required to “recruit additional staff or upskill their existing workforce” (p. 12). The expansion of early learning programs for all four-year-old children, including in child care contexts, will necessitate new qualification requirements for staff working in child care.

Next, the section outlines a “National Early Years Learning Framework” (p. 12). The “particular skill” of early childhood teachers will be critical to helping the “developmental needs” of “each individual child”. The help will also come from a new Early Years Learning Framework that will be part of a “nationally consistent” approach to early childhood. The framework will include “play-based learning, pre-literacy and pre-numeracy skills”, with an “emphasis on learning and development”.

Yet, at the same time, it will not be a “school like curriculum” (p. 12) and early childhood centres “would not become like schools”.

Another heading in this second section of the document is “Early Childhood Workforce Strategy” (p. 13). This one-page part is central to this research focus on early childhood teachers’ professional identities, and thus, is given close scrutiny. An introduction/rationale is followed by three parts, outlining strategies for upskilling the early years workforce. There are three key initiatives: “extra university places”, “HECS relief”, and “No TAFE fees for child care trainees”. The first two strategies focus on early childhood teacher qualifications. An argument is made for qualification attainment that is necessary because of “increased demand” in early childhood programs, which resulted in a “workforce crisis”. Attention to the expansion of the number of “university places to train early childhood educators” (p. 13) is a focus, with a commitment to 1500 “additional fully-funded university places”. Next, immediately under the heading “HECS relief for early childhood teachers”, priority is given to the idea that “all children” should have access to the “best possible early learning programs”. This will be attainable through incentives of “HECS repayments” to a teacher who is prepared to work with children “from our most disadvantaged backgrounds”. Children in “rural and regional areas, indigenous communities and areas of socio-economic disadvantage” are all set to benefit from a university-qualified teacher. The third strategy in this section pledges “no TAFE fees for child care trainees”. This point provides an overview of how staff other than degree-qualified early childhood teachers will be upskilled. Yet, the four-year university teaching degree is the “gold star” qualification and the core focus of the document’s “early childhood workforce strategy”.

The final two parts of this section of the document focus on infrastructure: “A national government focused on early learning and care” (p. 14) and “A new Commonwealth–State agenda” (p. 15). Together, these sections map a new way of structuring early childhood using “a systemic and integrated approach” (p. 14). The establishment of new Early Learning Centres, and streamlining structural and funding arrangements, will see greater authority and control afforded by the Australian Government. A new “Office of Early Childhood Education” will have a dual function: “for early childhood education strategy” and “co-ordination of child

care policy”. This is another example of putting education and care together, yet at the same time, separating them.

This section continues its focus on the early years as pivotal for society and for the economy, and returns to research evidence as a way to argue the case for investment. According to the authors, “learning programs” are important (Rudd & Macklin, 2007b, p. 14), as long as they are “developmentally appropriate for a child’s age”. This is a truth permissible because of the “evidence”—the scientific discourses that afford early learning legitimacy.

“A Policy Snapshot”

The final page, “Labor’s New Directions for Early Childhood Education: A Policy Snapshot”, is a bulleted list of 12 points that reiterates the key points made in the document. As a policy snapshot, it could stand alone as an overview of the document without a requirement to digest pages of text. At a glance, it provides the reader with the conceptual vision of the document, but with no rationale. The book-ending of the document with the executive summary and this policy snapshot enables condensed versions to be readily digestible.

In this first section of the chapter, the application of a number of techniques enabled a systematic analysis of the document, *New Directions*. Each section of the document was considered in sequential order. This process enabled discourses that were read as dominant to be mapped. Economics and neuroscience are drawn on to make a compelling case to invest in the early years. The “scientificity” (Lather, 2006) of these discourses assigns power (Foucault, 1984b) and legitimacy to the early years. Early childhood is now central to education, and pivotal in the economy of the country. Speaking early childhood as “education” and diminishing “care” is a feature of the document. Early childhood teacher professional identities are constituted through these and other discourses that were accessible at the time, in the document.

Next in this chapter is a discussion of some of the dominant discourses that emerged through genealogically redescribing the document, *New Directions*. Attention is turned first to the “child as subject”.

5.3 CHILD AS SUBJECT

The production of the child as a “subject” (Foucault, 1971) sees discourses compete, collide and intersect to produce images of the child. Alongside economics/investment, two discourses—child development and neuroscience—were located in *New Directions* that constitute the child. The image of the child produces professional identities of early childhood teachers through these and other discourses.

5.3.1 Child development

Child development theories shape understandings and conceptions of children in the early years (Berk, 2009) and as central to early childhood preservice teacher education (Langford, 2005). The dominance of “developmentalism of one sort or another” has been infiltrating early childhood “for years” (Grieshaber, 2008, p. 508). The discourse of child development appears at regular intervals throughout *New Directions*, and on most occasions, appears together with learning: “play-based learning and development” (p. 2); “early learning and development” (p. 4); “brain development and early learning” (p. 8); “early learning and development programs” (p. 8); “learning and development” (p. 10). The discourse of child development is afforded particular weight in the document through reference to a “leading developmental researcher Jack Shonkoff” (p. 4). Quotes from Shonkoff’s book *Neurons to Neighbourhoods* add credibility to the case to reform early childhood. One quote in particular calls for “... foundational capabilities on which subsequent development builds” (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000, cited p. 4), situating early childhood as part of the lifelong learning continuum depicted on the front cover of the document. The development that follows will build on these “foundational” skills forged through participation in early childhood programs. The child as subject is produced through the child development discourse as “needy” of an early childhood program that will help his/her “development”. The “scientificity” (Lather, 2006) of child development assigns power and signifies importance. The early childhood teacher is charged with the responsibility (Burman, 1994) to ensure that the programs offered meet “foundational capabilities on which subsequent development builds” (p. 4).

One section of *New Directions*, which discusses the National Early Years Learning Framework (p. 12), is saturated with references to child development. In

this three-paragraph, 16-line section, the word development appears four times: “learning and development needs” (p. 12); “each child’s development needs” (p. 12); “learning and development” (p. 12); “different stages of development” (p. 12). Further reference to child development is located two pages later: “all children’s development” (p. 14) and “strong focus on the development and education” (OECD, 2006, cited in Rudd & Macklin, 2007b, p. 14).

Child development theory has been taken up in texts with a focus on “developmentally appropriate practice” (Bredekamp, 1987; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, 2009), the “so-called bible” (Grieshaber, 2008, p. 508) in early childhood. *New Directions* draws on DAP, calling for early childhood programs to focus on “age-appropriate learning” (p. 12) and be “developmentally appropriate for a child’s age” (p. 14). Weight is added to this call through further reference to “international evidence” that legitimates this approach to “early childhood learning”. The focus on an age-stage approach to early childhood is consistent with DAP. This approach has been critiqued (see, for example, Burman, 2001; Grieshaber, 2008; Lubeck, 1998a, 1998b) for notable omissions concerning diversity, equity and inclusion. Partially in response to these critiques, the dominance of child development theory and DAP in preservice teacher education programs has been challenged (Langford, 2005; Ryan & Grieshaber, 2005).

Child development, and DAP, is taken up in *New Directions* as “weapons of mass seduction” (Grieshaber, 2008, p. 508). *New Directions*, in the spirit of DAP, calls for “consistency of development and learning” (p. 15). The focus on “all children” having the same early childhood “learning” proposes that children achieve the same levels of child development, apparently with little room for difference. Child development and DAP are put forward as the way to “do” early childhood learning programs, and ensure that children’s needs, and those of the nation, are met. The professional identity of early childhood teachers is produced as ensuring that children meet developmental milestones at particular ages, in line with child development theory.

Intertwined with child development theory is neuroscience, and this too was located as a dominant discourse in the document.

5.3.2 Neuroscience/brain research

New Directions makes a compelling case for both child development and neuroscience as further necessitating the need for reform in early childhood. The early years are produced as important, and children as valued, because of how they develop in this period of life. The work of the early childhood teacher is produced as very important work because the benefits are multiple. The neuroscience/brain research powerfully adds to these discursive intersections: When brain research is combined with economic analysis of the benefits of early childhood education, the case for greater investment in childhood learning becomes overwhelming (Rudd & Macklin, 2007b, p. 4).

Neuroscience is drawn on in *New Directions* to denote the importance of early childhood. When this type of research is brought into argument to reform early childhood, the case for investment becomes difficult to refute. As a regime of truth, it produces the early years, and work in the early years as important- not only for children, but also for the economy of the country. Such logic shifts the argument for investment from one of being desirable, to one that is *necessary*.

Yet again, the reference in *New Directions* to text from the book *From Neurons to Neighbourhood: The Science of Early Childhood Development* (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000) makes a compelling argument for the importance of the early years:

During this early period of life, brain cell growth and “wiring” of connections drives “remarkable linguistic and cognitive gains” and development of “emotional, social, regulatory and moral capacities”. (p. 4)

Not only does the neuroscience claim particular areas of child development and their progression, it focuses on ages or periods of development that are most critical (Lally, 1998, 2010; Mustard, 2002). A lack of policy action is used to explain why “Australian children aged three and four are being left behind at an age that is critical for brain development and early learning and clearly predicts on-going educational achievement” (Rudd & Macklin, 2007b, p. 8). A child “being left behind” compounds the embarrassment generated through the call for Australia to be competitive. At the same time, if a child is “left behind” and does not meet key development and neurological milestones, this will, it seems, have dire consequences for their wellbeing, for their “educational achievement”. Neuroscience, with its use of graphs and visuals, makes an alluring case for the importance of early childhood.

The science of brain research is power/knowledge (Foucault, 1984b)—the facts are proven, and thus, are produced as a truth. The “scientificity” (Lather, 2006) produces a truth that critical periods of brain development require attention, and this includes early childhood education.

The *New Directions* document draws on neuroscience/brain research to make a case for investing and increasing funding in the early years with an argument that “...all children are born wired for feelings and ready to learn”. However, it is from birth to age five that “children rapidly develop foundational capabilities on which subsequent development builds” (Rudd & Macklin, 2007b, p. 4). Additionally, the neuroscience/brain research makes it permissible to speak “the importance of early learning” (p. 4).

Neuroscience validates and legitimates early childhood. The evidence of brain development produces the early years as important, and work in the early years as important work. The importance of the early years is not new to people who work within the field of early childhood, though the science of brain research affords a new status, accessible and tangibly arguable to people outside of the field, including politicians.

5.3.3 Why not babies?

New Directions speaks early childhood as a foundation for future learning and makes a case that learning begins “when a baby is born” (Rudd & Macklin, 2007b, p. 14). The claim is made that the “education revolution” will focus “on where learning begins, in the early years” (p. 2). Elsewhere, the document defines learning as “Informal learning or pre-learning begins much earlier than school” (p. 14). Such logic would suggest that investment should be made for children much younger than school. Yet, the proposed universal access strategy is “accessible to all four year olds” (p. 11), with possible “options for extending some form of early learning programs to all three year olds” (p. 12).

New Directions draws on neuroscience/brain research (Heckman, 2004; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000) to prove that the early years are important. This research emphasises that there are “critical periods” of brain development, particularly birth to three years (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). At the same time, arguments based on investment/economics (see Section 5.4) claim that the earlier the investment, the

better the outcomes (Heckman, 2000). Yet, *New Directions* proposes universal preschool for only four-year-old children. The regime of truth created appears to be that investment in the early years is important, though the investment will be for four-year-olds, in the year prior to formal school commencing. The investment will not be for children birth to three. Additionally, the logic that the earlier the investment, the greater the benefit, seems to resist this discourse to provide universal access to early childhood programs for younger children. This discursive tension offers not a resolution, but an irony. Would it be discursively permissible to suggest, using the same argument and regime of truth of neuroscience and investment, that there should be universal access for a newborn baby?

It is suggested that under these discursive conditions, it would not be sayable that the youngest of children, babies, should be in child care. If this was sayable, the professional identity of an early childhood teacher would be constituted as a “teacher of new-born babies”, not a “teacher of four-year-old children”. The work of various economists indicates that the greatest benefits would come from investment in educating children under three (Heckman, 2004). Economic investment for this age group is targeted on home and family support (Dodge, 2003). Apparently, the age of four makes it sayable for children to be in an early childhood program. Clearly absent in *New Directions* is a focus on early childhood programs for children birth to three years. This absence raises questions about child care use—with one possible reading that children under the age of four years should be at home.

The focus on three- and four-year-old children aligns with child development and attachment theory discourses that produce regimes of truth. Child development discourses claim that around the age of three, a child’s social development sees them more interested and “developmentally capable” of engaging with other children (Berk, 2009). Additionally, attachment theory purports that babies and infants benefit from one on one attachment with a primary caregiver (Belsky, 1990). These, and other discourses, have been used elsewhere (Bilddulph, 2006; Manne, 2005) for reasons that children should not be in child care from a young age. The age of three, it seems, is an age at which participation in early childhood “education and learning” is discursively permissible, and perhaps necessary.

5.3.4 “Play-based learning”

Play as a concept is integral in early childhood. It is woven so tightly into the fabric of early childhood that there is an underlying assumption that play is “a universal right for children” (Grieshaber & McArdle, 2010, p. 1). Elsewhere, it is argued that children develop and learn through play (Bredekamp & Copple, 2009). *New Directions* puts play together with learning and speaks play as desirable in early childhood programs.

Even though the main focus in *New Directions* is on education, there is acknowledgement that this might look different for young children. “Play-based learning” is repeatedly referred to and explained in the document, and this emphasis produces the discursive rule that play-based learning is essential for children’s education (p. 2). In the provision of universal preschool, “early play-based learning” will take place with “development programs” (p. 2), and play must be “age-appropriate play-based care” (p. 9).

In a nod to DAP, discussed previously in this chapter, the kind of play advocated in the document will be in line with child development, and thus, legitimate. Just one page over in the document a further proviso is added: “structured play-based learning would be provided to assist the development of pre-literacy and pre-numeracy skills” (p. 10). The development of these skills, which are subject areas in the primary school curriculum, will seemingly enable a key goal of the document—“educational attainment” (p. 3). Associating play with education, learning, child development and “structured” learning assigns particular conditions for play. Structured play, which facilitates learning, must legitimate the high-stakes investment that is being put forward in the document.

Another significant qualifier for play in relation to staff qualifications is read in these phrases: “early play-based learning and development programs delivered by degree-qualified teachers” (p. 2) and “delivery of a play-based early learning by a four year qualified teacher” (p. 16). The early childhood teacher, it seems, has the qualification to provide play that is commensurately important with the investment in the early years.

5.3.5 “Smart productive citizens”

A key argument in *New Directions* is that if education levels are not high, including in early childhood, this will affect the “economic prosperity of Australia”. The combination of neuroscience and economics moves the argument from one of children, and their rights here and now, into a space in which early childhood policy is developed for the welfare of the “economy”.

The “innovation-based economies” (Rudd & Macklin, 2007b, p. 3) that Australia is part of, call for “smart productive citizens” (p. 3). This disrupts discourses that are in circulation—for instance education and care—that shape early childhood and work in early childhood. Speaking of children as “smart, productive citizens” (p. 3) introduces other discourses. A smart child is produced through neuroscience. A productive child contributes to the economy through their future labour force participation. As a citizen, a child is produced as a potential future functioning member of society who has avoided the dire consequences of “dependency on welfare, our hospitals, and our criminal justice system” (p. 3). It necessitates an early childhood teacher who holds together competing discourses of education/care, neuroscience, economics and human capital theory. The work of the teacher is to produce “productive citizens”. The discursive conditions that constitute professional identities of early childhood teachers insist, through *New Directions*, that the teacher is capable of fulfilling economic potential of children. Moreover, no longer are smart children only to be produced in kindergarten and preschool. Work in child care is now also part of the production of smart children who will contribute to the economy because it is the “quality of the learning, not where it takes place” (p. 2). This disruption to the discursive conditions for child care position child care and work in child care as part of children’s learning, which enables them to be “smart, productive citizens”.

The child as subject (Foucault, 1984b) is produced in *New Directions*, at least partially, through discourses of child development and neuroscience/brain research. The “scientificity” (Lather, 2006) of these discourses produces regimes of truth about the child. A child as part of an ongoing developmental continuum in which “early learning” is aligned with ages/stages, produces a child who needs an early childhood teacher to ensure that key milestones are met. Neuroscience/brain research is assigned particular validity in *New Directions* through “international research” that

adds further weight to the importance of children and the critical periods of development in the early childhood years. This adds importance to the early childhood teachers' professional identities, but at the same time this disruption to the discursive rules produces complexity and confusion. The early years are important, though some years are more important than others—and not the years that neuroscience/brain research suggests. This point will be revisited and connected with the following two talk-as-text data chapters, Chapters 6 and 7.

5.4 CHILD AS ECONOMIC UNIT

Children's development and learning is central to the orientation and purpose of early childhood programs (Langford, 2005; OECD, 2006; Penn, 2011b). The provision of education and care in before-school contexts, including child care, provides children with opportunities for growth and development. *New Directions* introduces another discourse, and speaks "the strong relationship between early learning and development—before formal education begins—and improved economic prosperity" (Rudd & Macklin, 2007b, p. 4). It is claimed that "learning and development" leads to "improved economic prosperity". This presents a new orientation for early childhood and work in early childhood contexts.

The insistence that learning and development are bound to economics produces a new way of thinking about early childhood, including child care. Learning and development are acknowledged as important, though there is something else at play here. Children are valued for what they are potentially able to contribute to the economy, under the right conditions. With the weight of the nation resting on their shoulders, children are produced, through *New Directions*, as economic units. Through participation in early childhood programs, children will become "productive units", produced as "products" of the investment. The early childhood teacher becomes produced as custodian of these products/children, vested with responsibility to ensure that investment enables a "more productive workforce". Although internationally, documents have been generated about early childhood investment through financial institutions (OECD, 2006; UNESCO, 2006; World Bank, 2002), this represents a new direction for early childhood policy in Australia. As a result of this new direction, early childhood teachers' identities are now clearly shaped through economic discourses.

The investment discourse is drawn on repeatedly in *New Directions* to make a case for attention to the early years. This emphasis is visible in the document using a word count tool on these words: invest (used 39 times), investment (40 times), investing (7 times), economic (64 times) and economics (7 times). However, it is not simply a matter of funding and investing in early childhood for now. The benefits claimed through a body of “evidence”, and “International evidence” claim “long-term benefits for children, and for the wider community” (p. 3). This evidence enables the regimes of truth to be spoken. It is difficult to argue with such compelling arguments made by international organisations and a Nobel Laureate. The need to invest is spoken as a taken-for-granted assumption; to question it would be unsayable (Foucault, 1972/1989) under the discursive conditions in *New Directions*.

One quote, in particular, which is attributed to James Heckman, Nobel Laureate in Economic Sciences, is used in *New Directions* to construct an argument for investment in early childhood: “The real question is how to use the available funds wisely. The best evidence supports the policy prescription: Invest in the very young” (cited in Rudd & Macklin, 2007b, p. 4). The inclusion of a statement based on research from a Nobel Laureate works to assign status and power to the call to invest in the early years. The economic discourse works to produce a regime of truth that the early years matter, and moreover, the earlier the investment, and the younger the child, the greater the benefit.

The benefits of investing are, apparently, multiple. For children, the argument is made that they will not only benefit now, but also into the future. It is claimed that if “children are to enjoy increases in their living standards that are compatible to those we have benefited from in recent years we must meet these challenges” (p. 3). It seems that everyone will have something to gain through funding early childhood. This moves the case for investment into a new discursive space, where it is for children and families, and now also for “the wider community”. This logic, where the “wider community” becomes a stakeholder in the early years, makes a case for the level of investment to be higher. Then, it seems, the benefits from investment work to create a broader community benefits.

New Directions was released after a period of economic growth and prosperity for Australia. It also came at a time when the global financial crisis was imminent.

Sandwiched between high and low economic times, it draws on these to consolidate the case for investment to secure the future of the economy. For early childhood teachers, this works to produce their identities as investors, who are charged with responsibility to ensure that the investment made in early childhood reaps the benefits promised through the economic modelling.

The truth (Foucault, 1980a) produced through *New Directions* is of education, including early childhood, as essential and integral for the country's prosperity. This produces the child as a commodity, an economic unit, for which the return on investment (ROI) is measurable for the country's economic outcomes. No longer are the benefits of a child's participation in child care beneficial so that parents are able to engage in the labour market. This re-positioning of children aligns with Rose's (1989) summary of holding together of seemingly competing new ways of being part of the enterprising terrain:

the path to business success lies in engaging the employee with the goals of the company at the level of his or her subjectivity, aligning the wishes, needs, and aspirations of each individual who works for the organization with the successful pursuit of those objectives. (p. 56)

A child in an early learning program is produced as a commodity that will provide economic benefits in the future. This *commodification* is a new way of seeing children in early childhood. Work in early childhood is weighted with new responsibility: that of the economy of the nation. For early childhood teachers, their professional identities are produced as part of this, where the child is an "economic commodity". The teacher is constituted as an "economic custodian", who is called upon to nurture the child as economic commodity, though more importantly to ensure that the investment is warranted.

5.4.1 The economics of early childhood

The regime of truth that is spoken through *New Directions* is that economics is important for early childhood, and early childhood is important for economics. A major discursive shift that is read in *New Directions* is the economic discourse in early childhood is now mainstream. Not so long ago, the idea of profits made by corporate child care provider ABC Learning (ABC Learning Centres Limited, 2006) affronted the early childhood field (Brennan, 2007; see discussion about child care in

Chapter 2, Section 2.1.1). Making money and focusing on profits and economic forecasts were *not* part of the historical orientation of early childhood (Osgood, 2012; Press, 2006; Wong, 2007) and the identity of the feminised workforce, which has performed its role based on middle-class values (Osgood, 2012). Bonding economics with early childhood is not an easy existence; the collision of the two discourses marks a new discursive space in which the early childhood teacher is now called for to work *with* the discourse of economics.

In the first section of *New Directions*, research from a number of economic institutions is drawn on (p. 5). For example, research about the US from the Brookings Institute is used to argue for investment in the early years: “high-quality universal preschool policy would boost the size of the US economy by US\$270billion by 2050 and by over US\$2 trillion by 2080” (cited in Rudd & Macklin, 2007b, p. 5). This US-based evidence, held together with the trepidation generated in the document to be wary of “competitors”, invokes fear and a compulsion to invest. The link to similar benefits for Australia is made by association. It is spoken as a “non-choice”. Australia has a responsible government, and therefore, it must invest—it would be irresponsible not to. The monetary value assigned to children’s early learning and development, and the capacity for this to be translated in into financial gain, presents a different way of framing early years policy.

The discourses of economics, investment and productivity compete in new ways with other discourses that circulate in early childhood. For example, children are rhetorically at the centre of early childhood program curriculum (Berk, 2009; Hill, Stremmel, & Fu, 2005; Malaguzzi, 1998; Rinaldi, 2006). By adding investment, economics and productivity to the discursive space, other ways to conceive early years programs are introduced and the early childhood teacher is produced in new ways. Although this does not require the negation of “children”, it seems that other new discourses have entered the lexicon and, through the research and evidence that is drawn on, require these competing discourses to be held together. The ways in which these discourses compete, collide and intersect in *New Directions* produce early childhood professional identities in ways that necessitate an economically-savvy teacher, who at the same time is child-focused.

Yet, in *New Directions*, economics takes precedence over children's needs and rights. This is discursively permissible as education/schooling and the early years were argued to be important economic enablers. Such logic produces education as important and to be valued, especially for the economy. It also allows education, across school and early childhood contexts, to be critical in the economy of the nation. Educational contexts are no longer only important for children and their potential. Given the claim that "early learning helps build economic prosperity" (Rudd & Macklin, 2007b, p. 3), it becomes permissible to say that the experiences children have, particularly through the participation in early childhood, are central to the future economic growth. The identities of early childhood teachers are produced as custodians of investments made in children and early childhood. A teacher becomes an investor who is assigned responsibility to ensure that investment in children comes to fruition- through the attainment of "economic prosperity".

The power/knowledge (Foucault, 1980a, 1980b) that reside in economic and investment discourses makes the claims in the document compelling. The "scientific" evidence provides legitimacy for funding reform in early childhood. There are, however, other discourses that were located in the document that add further weight to the call for changes to early childhood provision in Australia.

5.4.2 Human capital theory

Human capital is a means by which investment in education increases productivity, participation in the workforce and, in turn, the economy (Dodge, 2003). Through education, human capital enables labour to be performed, which produces economic value. *New Directions* positions education as central to human capital, and calls on early childhood to help increase productivity, both through parental workforce participation now, and later, through children's workforce participation. Inherent in human capital theory are the links made between early years policy and economic outcomes, both now and for the future.

New Directions draws on human capital theory as a rationale to attract attention to the early years. The document claims that by "investing in human capital formation" (p. 2) there will be "significant benefits". Apparently, Australia is set to "reap" (p. 7; p. 11) for "individuals, society and the economy". Such broad-scale claims produce the discursive rule that human capital is a necessary part of a

productive society. Investment in human capital is primarily achieved through attention to education and training, with a justification for this drawn from “a very large body of evidence showing that increasing education has a substantial effect on productivity” (Harris, 2002, p. 35). With such far-reaching gains, the regime of truth is that human capital is attainable through early years reform, and this is spoken as absolutely essential—for everyone.

Human capital comes under the broader umbrella of social policy investments and is considered beneficial for economic growth (Dodge, 2003). The focus on human capital has become embedded across education policy with “a dominant economic purpose, with almost every major government document and statement emphasising the importance of education to the development of human capital” (Reid, 2009, p. 6). The regime of truth produced through *New Directions* is that “to invest more in human capital” (p. 3) will secure higher levels of “educational attainment” (presumably a child’s) and “labour force participation” (presumably their parents and the children themselves when they grew up). It appears that this, in turn, will lead to greater “productivity”. Figure 5.5 captures this reasoning, and examines how this positions early childhood and children.

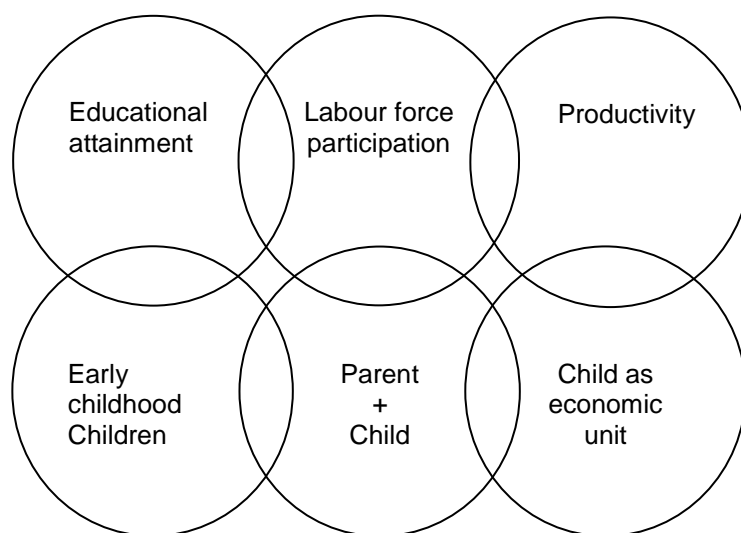


Figure 5.5. Human capital theory calling for children as economic unit.

5.4.3 The cost of loving

The discourse of investment/economics and human capital works to produce the early childhood teacher as responsible for “economic units” of investment. At the same time, the work of the early childhood teacher is intermeshed with other

discourses. One dominant discourse that shapes work in child care is *love*. As part of the “soft skills” (Hatcher, 2008) in feminised work, along with passion, dedication and commitment, love discursively constitutes the early childhood professional. Love of children has long been noted as important to work in child care (Page, 2011).

Although the word love is not used in *New Directions*, it is implied through the association with the care of children. The intersections between care/love and economics, investment and human capital sees these discourses compete and collide to produce the early childhood teacher. For them, investment/economics are now the “game are we in” (Lee & McWilliam, 2009). The child and early childhood teacher are spoken as critical to the economy of the nation.

Early childhood teacher professional identities now include awareness of “the cost of loving”. These identities are constituted through discourses of love/care along with economics/investment/productivity that are each necessary, and held together in tension. The early childhood teacher is produced through economics and work with children is constituted through associated costs and dividends. At the same time, the work with children involves care, partially for children, and partially for parents, though mostly for the economy of the nation. With this responsibility, the early childhood teacher must navigate these competing discourses, which are both necessary and true (Haraway, 1991).

The next section looks to the ways in which education and care are spoken in *New Directions*.

5.5 EARLY CHILDHOOD: CARE AND/OR EDUCATION

The term *early childhood education and care* emerged in recent years, notably in international documents (see, for example, OECD, 2001, 2006) and Australian-government initiated documents (see, for example, COAG, 2008). However, the term has not been taken up universally, at least in Australia. For example, documents that focus on birth to age eight contexts include a range of terms: *early years*, *early education*, and most commonly *early childhood education* (see for example, DEEWR, 2009c; Rudd & Macklin, 2007b). More recently, the addition of *and care* to the term early childhood education has been taken up across government policy, texts, and research papers. Chapter 2 historically and politically linked particular settings to education and care: education was connected to school and

kindergarten/preschool, and care was connected to child care (see Chapter 2, Section 2.1.1).

New Directions creates a new discursive space in which “education and learning” is acknowledged as occurring before school commences. Additionally, by levelling the playing field, it seems that now education can occur in a range of early childhood contexts, including “child care” (p. 11) and “family day care”. The location of education/learning together *with* child care is claimed as a new direction in the document. The assumption suggests that the previous binary view of education/care is now being disrupted and they are being held together. Yet, it is not as simple as this, and there many examples of reversals and deviations in the text as attempts were made to bring education and care together.

There is acknowledgement in *New Directions* that for “too long early childhood education and care have been viewed as separate activities” (p. 11). The document purportedly resists a “binary of education or care—one or the other early childhood education or care services” (Rudd & Macklin, 2007a, p. 10). On occasions in this section, education and care are spoken together, for example, “learning and care services” (p. 13). Yet, the phrase “early childhood education *or* care” (p. 10, emphasis added) is also used. The document attempts to hold education and care together, though at the same time, distinguishes between them. Although both are spoken together, the distinction between them negates diminishes and “others” (Hughes & MacNaughton, 2000) child care. On 33 occasions in *New Directions*, education/learning and care are spoken together. Of these, education/learning appears first 29 times, with “and care” added on. Of the four times that care appears first, and education/learning is added on, two are direct quotes from UNESCO and a report. The order in which education/learning and care appear in the document produces education as dominant and valued, and care as secondary.

One way to locate the ways in which *New Directions* tried to bring together education and care was to look the frequency of terms included. The document uses the terms early learning, early childhood, early childhood education, and early childhood education and care, *and* the relatively new term early childhood care with similar frequency. No particular pattern was determined in the usage of these terms; it appeared that they were used randomly. Nevertheless, discursive tensions abound in the document as care and education compete and collide.

Elsewhere in *New Directions*, care and education are spoken separately as one or the other and are thus distinguished, for example, “early childhood education or child care”. At other times, notably in the document title, care is omitted entirely, “Early childhood education” (cover). The proposal to develop an “Office of Early Childhood Education” (p. 14), also omits “and Care”. This discursive tension of education and/or/not care persists throughout the document.

New Directions acknowledges the similarities and differences between early childhood education contexts, and early childhood care contexts. At one point in an attempt to draw care and education together, the document uses the proposed National Early Years Learning Framework as a platform: “specific emphasis on play-based learning, pre-literacy and pre-numeracy skills, focusing on how to bridge the gap between care and learning”. (p. 12). Here, play is drawn on to link care, presumably child care, and “learning”, presumably preschool. This is another example of the document producing child care and preschool as separate, but it is also text that draws on play as an “acceptable” pedagogical approach in early childhood.

The “othering” (Hughes & MacNaughton, 2000) of child care diminishes child care as an early childhood context and signifies power (Foucault, 1984b) to preschool/kindergarten as a context where learning/education reside. Child care, is now required to be part of this discourse, with little acknowledgement that education/learning may have in fact occurred in child care prior to the proposed *New Directions*. The logic of child development and neuroscience produce the years in child care as important because of a child’s age, but it seems the context signifies the degree of value assigned to where and how learning in the early childhood years occurs.

5.5.1 Quality

The concept of quality in early childhood is used as an indicator of the benefits for participation in an early childhood program (Sylva, Melhuis, Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford, & Taggart, 2004). If the program is of high quality, the benefits are immense, for children, families and the broader community. Quality legitimates early childhood programs (Ishimine et al., 2009), with child care produced as more acceptable if it is of high quality. Yet, quality is a contested concept (Dahlberg et al.,

2007; Tobin, 2005) and its complexity means that it is difficult to measure and quantify. Quality measures have been critiqued for normalising expectations with “conformity of a service to the norm” (p. 9). Moreover, quality is considered contingent on a range of contextual factors, and as such, problematised as a measurement or provider of accountability and assurance (Dahlberg et al., 2007; Tobin et al., 2009).

It seems that investment in early childhood education is only beneficial if is “high quality”. “High quality” appears 12 times in the document, along with “quality improvement” (p. 15) and “quality assurance” (p. 15). The call for higher levels of investment in early childhood demand assurance that the funding will yield the desired outcomes. One way to “improve the quality of early childhood education and care” is focus on four-year-old children’s “access to early learning” (p. 10). The regime of truth is that quality is validated through education/learning.

Quality is also aligned with measurability and accountability discourses. The universal preschool programs will be “supported by national standards that promote quality learning and care” (p. 10) and “quality improvement and accreditation system” (p. 15). High quality early childhood education will provide assurance the investment is worthwhile.

New Directions speaks quality in terms of “early learning and care” and “early childhood education and care”. The emphasis on “learning” and “education”, along with the discourse of neuroscience denoting the importance of the early years, enables a case for “degree-qualified early childhood teachers”. A “universal preschool” program calls for early childhood teachers with a four year university bachelor degree. The investment in early childhood necessitates that this program is more than care, and that it involves education and learning.

One way through which *New Directions* attempted to make sense of this tension between education/learning and care is to look to an inclusive name for early childhood programs that produce both education and care. The newly established integrated early childhood promised through *New Directions* will be co-located with primary schools and have a new name: Early Learning Centres. This will see “Early Learning Centres incorporating long day care” (p. 14). That child care will be added to education, not the other way around, marks an important point concerning the focus on early education and learning in *New Directions*. For early childhood

teachers, indeed four-year qualified teachers, their identities are produced as educators, with a diminished focus on care.

This section of the chapter has examined the ways in which *New Directions* attempted to bring together discourses of education and care. At times, these two words are spoken together in the document; however, care is usually *othered* and added as secondary to education. This produces discursive rules that constitute the professional identities of early childhood teachers.

Although the literature generally connects the discourses of quality and staff qualifications (Sylva et al., 2004), *New Directions* does not speak these discourses together. A degree-qualification is spoken as the benchmark to attain investment yield and outcomes for children. The following section of this chapter turns to how the early childhood degree is spoken in the document, and how this produces early childhood teachers' professional identities.

5.6 A “WORKFORCE IN CRISIS” NEEDS DEGREE-QUALIFIED EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHERS

Throughout *New Directions*, calls are made for early childhood to be different in Australia and a central part of this relates to “degree-qualified teachers” (p. 2); degree-qualified early childhood educator (p. 9); degree-qualified early childhood teacher (p. 10); degree-qualified early childhood educators (p. 10). In addition, the claim is made that a lack of staff either qualified or willing to work in early childhood has resulted in a “workforce in crisis” (p. 13). The “staffing crisis” (p. 13) is caused by problems in attracting and retaining suitably qualified staff. It seems that there is a need to “expand opportunities for early childhood studies at universities, and provide incentives for graduates to work in the child care sector (p. 12). The economic/investment discourses, together with neuroscience, demand “quality” early childhood, and these discourses intersect to necessitate university-qualified teachers.

Up until the time of the publication of *New Directions*, qualification requirements were under the state and territory-based regulations. The document marks a shift where qualifications are now stipulated at a national level by the Australian Government. *New Directions* names a “four-year” (p. 16) degree qualification as a *gold standard* to provide for early childhood education. Three-year early childhood degree programs are offered in most states and territories, yet these

degrees do not enable teacher registration. Debate is ongoing about using a three- or four-year teaching qualification as an indicator of quality (Ishimine et al., 2009), but *New Directions* chooses a four-year degree as the benchmark. This is the first time in Australia that a four-year degree is required of people who want to work in child care, though in some states and territories, a three-year qualification has been required for some years (NSW Government, 2004). There are high stakes here—a call for significant investment in early childhood demands high quality and this necessitates the “high” qualification: a four-year degree.

The specification that the qualification be a four-year degree works to elevate the status of early childhood teachers. Degree-qualified early childhood teachers are spoken as having specialised skills and expertise: “Knowing what works for each individual child is the particular skill of early childhood teachers, and the key to giving them the best start” (p. 12). The knowledge and expertise of an early childhood teacher is the “key” to quality, and to the success of the investment. There is much resting on the shoulders of a four-year degree-qualified early childhood teacher. The professional identity is legitimised through the qualification held—the degree is now necessary for the economy of the nation. At the same time, the discourses of economics and neuroscience that demand the degree constitute the identities of early childhood teachers as needing to produce children who are “smart” and will contribute to “economic prosperity”. The early childhood teachers are no longer solely carers or solely educators. Through *New Directions*, their professional identities are also produced as investment brokers, with all of the ensuing responsibility for financial investment that this category suggests.

New Directions makes a distinction that a degree-qualified early childhood educator holds skills and knowledge that positions her, and produces her identity as “expert”: “... when a child participates in an early learning program under the supervision of a degree-qualified early childhood educator, the long term economic benefits of early childhood education are even greater” (Rudd & Macklin, 2007b, p. 9). The regime of truth becomes that because of the degree, the investment in early childhood is validated. The degree will make the investment “reap” (p. 7; p. 11) the promised economic outcomes.

5.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter, the first of three of data chapters, has mapped some of the discourses located in *New Directions*. This document was selected as it read as a “moment of arising” (Foucault, 1984a, p. 83) and a shift in the discursive field of early childhood. A genealogical approach has examined the discursive conditions of possibility that have provided new ways to think about the constitution of early childhood teacher professional identities at this moment in time. Through the systematic and methodical analysis, a number of discourses were located in the document.

New Directions makes the claim that the “economic prosperity” (p. 3) of Australia relies on investment in early childhood. Universal preschool for four-year-old children will achieve much for the country and provide benefits almost beyond imagination. The arguments to invest are compelling and the neuroscience/brain research/child development together with economic/investment discourses demand that early childhood is funding is increased. The intersection of these discourses produces professional identities of early childhood teachers as a necessary part of the country’s economy, and thus, worthy of high status. The child care sector and work in child care settings are spoken as necessary, with children and the early childhood teacher called on as key to the economy of the nation. Through *New Directions* it becomes “sayable” (Foucault, 1972/1989) that the work the early childhood teacher performs is legitimated and valued; however, the professional identities produced through the document come with conditions.

One condition is that participation in a universal “early learning program” will only be beneficial for the economy it is “high quality”. Next, staff qualifications are spoken as important in *New Directions*, and the four-year degree-qualified early childhood teacher is the benchmark for providing a high-quality early childhood program. Given the level of investment, the early childhood education and learning program is produced as more than child care. Care is acknowledged as a valuable product of child care that allows parents to participate in the labour force, but the main value is for the economy. The logic is that if children participate in high-quality early childhood programs, with a degree-qualified teacher, the outcomes will be significant, for all.

However, there is another condition of the universal learning program related to the children's age. The claim is made that learning begins from birth, with neuroscience and economic discourses arguing that younger children benefit more, with the economic yield is actually greater for younger children. Yet, defying this discursive regime of truth, four years is selected as the age for universal access to early learning.

The collisions and intersections between these discourses that were read in *New Directions* produce children as "economic units". A focus on what children are able to contribute to the future economy of the nation re-positions children and produces these "smart productive citizens", not for who they are now, but for their future economic contribution. The early childhood teacher is produced through this image of a child and professional identities are disrupted through the category (Davies, 2004/2006) "the cost of loving".

The category of the cost of loving captures the collision between care/love, inherent in child care, and new discourses of investment/economics. Investment/economics has not completely replaced care/love, and these apparent opposites were not read as a binary because both are necessary and both are true (Haraway, 1991). They are held together in tension to produce early childhood teacher professional identities.

The next two chapters, Chapters 6 and 7, continue the process of discourse analysis and turn to focus group talk-as-text data to locate the ways in which preservice teachers produce the professional identities of early childhood teachers.

Chapter 6: Producing Early Childhood Teacher Professional Identities Through Talk-as-Text: Focus Groups with Preservice Teachers (Part 1)

Chapter 6 is the first of two data chapters that examines the second data set: the talk-as-text data from the focus groups. In Chapter 5, the first data set, a key political document called *New Directions: Universal access to early learning for 4 year olds* (Rudd & Macklin, 2007b), was read as a “moment of arising” (Foucault, 1984a, p. 83). Through a genealogical approach, some of the contradictions, reversals and minute deviations (Foucault, 1984a) were located in the document and mapped. As discursive conditions, they made it permissible to speak early childhood teacher professional identities at that point in time. Chapter 6 begins the investigation of these identities through the analysis of preservice teachers’ talk.

The talk-as-text data examined in this chapter was generated through focus group discussions with four groups of preservice teachers. The 18 participants were in the third year of a four-year early childhood degree program (see Appendix E). The preservice teachers were asked eight questions that were designed using the literature review of the literature (Chapter 2) and a methodology (Chapters 3 and 4) that would assist in addressing the Research Question that informed this thesis. The focus group questions concentrated on images of child care and images of the work in child care (see Appendix C). In keeping with the methodology, the focus group transcripts were treated as one conversation.

The reading of the talk as text works “with the shreds” (McWilliam, 1999, p. 182), where key sections come under examination. In this approach, the analysis addressed not the “whole fabric”, but the interesting possibilities that may assist understandings of early childhood teacher professional identities at this point in time (p. 182). Through close readings of the preservice teachers’ talk, discourses that work to produce the early childhood teacher were located. This was not a neat, linear process. Throughout the participants’ talk, there were contradictions, contingencies, reversals and ironies. In this, and the following data chapter, the transcripts are subjected to a redescription of talk-as-text. As the preservice teachers are “becoming” (Caldwell, 2007) early childhood teachers, there were particular

discourses available to them. These discourses compete and collide to produce regimes of truth about what can be said, and what cannot. The available discourses make permissible ways of “speaking into existence” (Sondergaard, 2002) the professional identities of early childhood teacher. The method applied was to identify, trace and locate the discourses that were read in the preservice teachers’ talk.

Steps were followed in order to identify some of the discourses at play in the focus group data. The starting point of a list of constructs, identified through the literature review, provided a framework for preliminary readings of the data. Through immersion in the data, multiple readings were undertaken. A colour coding system was used to locate emerging discourses. Patterns were identified and connections were made across the data. The ways in which the preservice teachers spoke children was identified as one way through which they produced early childhood teacher professional identities.

Leximancer© was one device that was useful to provide a broad overview of the four focus groups. A full explanation of how Leximancer© was applied in this research is included in the methodology chapter, Chapter 4 (see Section 4.6.3). For the talk-as-text data, the four focus groups were processed together and a concept map was generated. In similar way to its use for the *New Directions* document, this provided a provocation to consider the way preservice teachers produced early childhood teacher professional identities. Figure 6.1 presents a screenshot of the key themes from Leximancer©.

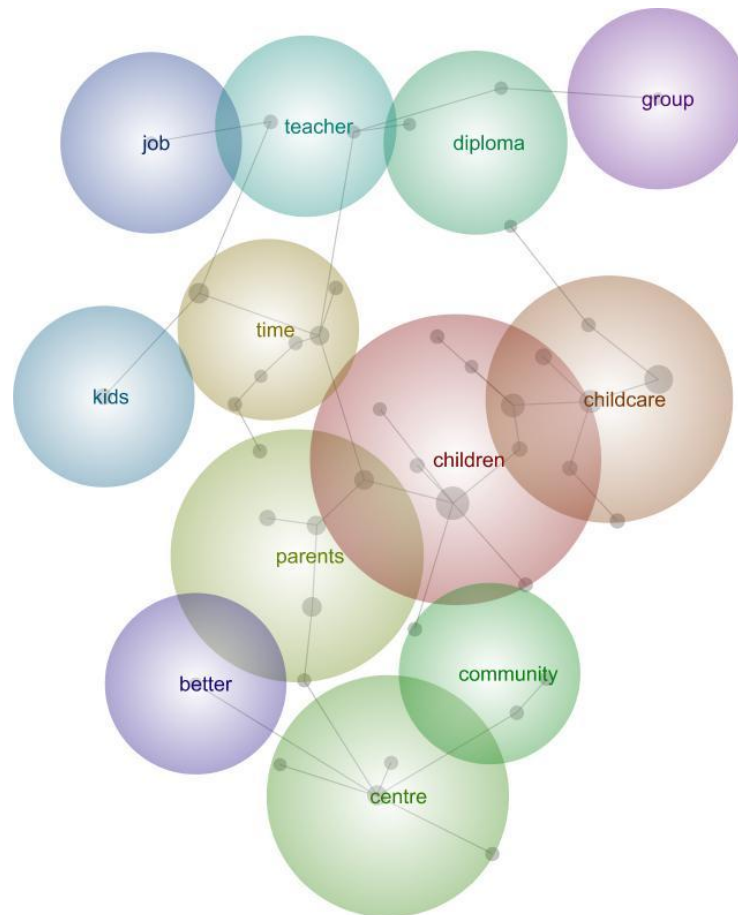


Figure 6.1. Leximancer© image for all four focus groups.

The application of Leximancer© indicated that the most frequently occurring themes in the preservice teachers' talk were: children, parents and child care. The proximity of the circles in Figure 1 denoted that these themes occurred close together in the talk. For example, when the word “children” occurred, other words that regularly appeared close to this word in the text were “parents” and “child care”.

The analytical methods outlined above reduced the data to find that a major way in which the participants produced early childhood teacher professional identities was through how they saw children and how they saw child care. Even though a simple collating of word use is not the foundation of the methodological approach applied in this thesis, these two broad conceptual structures were tested and found useful for organising the analysis in the two talk-as-text chapters (Chapters 6 and 7). Thus, two broad conceptual structures emerged for each of the talk-as-text data chapters: producing images of children (Chapter 6) and producing images of

child care (Chapter 7). This chapter focuses on the first of these—producing images of children.

6.1 PRODUCING IMAGES OF CHILDREN

The preservice teachers' talk included their views of children—their growth and development, how they learn, and what is important for them. These views were read as images of children. The use of images (plural) denotes the diversity and multiplicities in children (Grieshaber & Cannella, 2001b). Images of children was selected as a focus for analysing data because of the frequency of speaking children, and the ways that professional identities of early childhood teachers was constructed through this talk. Moreover, constructions of children produce early childhood, child care and work in child care in particular ways (Mitchell, 2010).

Throughout history, and in different contexts and cultures, diverse ideas have influenced constructions of children and childhood (James et al., 1998). As the preservice teachers spoke images of children, they drew from discourses that were accessible to them. At one point after discussion about the nature of work in child care, seemingly in an attempt to bring some clarification to the points that had been made, Amy spoke at some length about images of children:

It's the mood of the day with the view of the child. (FG 1: 640)

Amy positioned images of children as part of an historical constitution, with views changing over time. She recalled different understandings of children and referred to one unit/subject that she has studied that “kind of went through the views of the children” (FG 1: 641). Four images of children were drawn on:

the seen and not heard; they're the clean slate that you can put whatever you want onto them; or they're innately good and the world corrupts them; or they're half people; or the one in the professional and research world at the moment is that they're competent human beings. But it hasn't filtered into wider society as quickly as a lot of people would have liked. (FG 1: 642-648)

By drawing on discourses, Amy interpreted these as occurring in a continuous line of progression to where we are now. Amy referred to a unit of study in her course, in which she learned that there are differing views of children. Her understandings of children positioned each of these views as independent of the

other, and as a linear progression, with each image replaced with the next. She attempted to make sense of these different images of children by turning to the “dominant one”. The construction of the competent child is attributable to a number of intersecting theories of child development. Amy’s use of the term “professional and research” world indicates a high level of importance, where power/knowledge (Foucault, 1980a, 1980b) reside. Status and value is assigned to this image of the children. Its dominance is understood as connected with the power that comes with this discourse.

Amy’s summation of different images of children was the only place in the focus groups where images were spoken together. Elsewhere, the ways in which views about children were spoken were not as linear, and messier.

Four images of children were located in the preservice teachers’ talk: children in the most important years; children learning through play; children as competent; and children building relationships. These images were notable not only because of the frequency in the preservice teachers’ talk, but also for their depiction of struggles around making sense of child care and work in child care. Contrary to Amy’s interpretation, each of these images is constituted through discourses that are currently as well as historically in circulation. For example, an image of children in the most important years was produced through neuroscience/child development/research. The intersections and collisions between the discourses produce child care and work in child care in particular ways. The talk of images of children was often intertwined with views about child care. Although this chapter focuses on images of child care, some of the data in this chapter also includes talk of views on child care because this was spoken together with images of children. Figure 6.2 captures the ways in which these images manifested in the preservice teachers’ production of early childhood teacher professional identities.

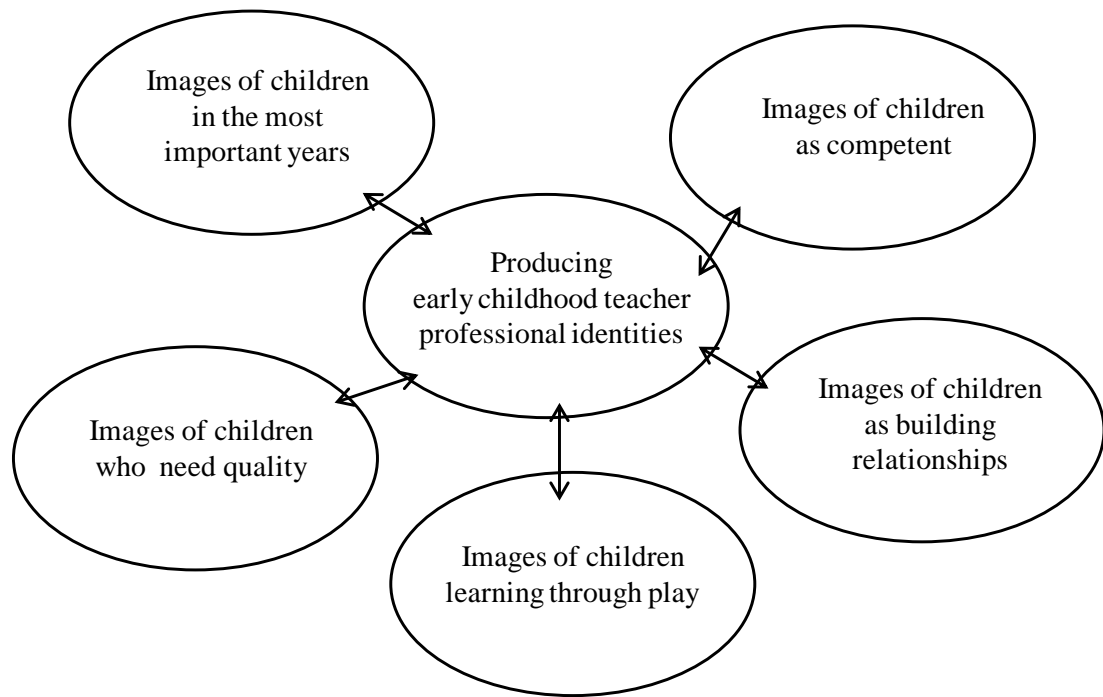


Figure 6.2. Producing early childhood teacher professional identities through talk of images of children.

In the following sections each of these four images of children are examined, and connections made between them.

6.1.1 Children in “the most important years”—neuroscience/brain research

In this section, the preservice teachers’ talk is read as producing an image of children “in the most important years” (FG 3: 115). In the preservice teachers’ talk, the importance of the early years was made sayable through discourse. Neuroscience/brain research is located first; next, child development is examined; and third, the preservice teachers’ talk of children as “lifelong learners” is considered. These discourses enabled the early years to be spoken as important, and thereby producing early childhood teacher professional identities as equally important.

Scientific brain research purports that there are particular periods during which a child’s brain develops (Lally, 1998; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). The preservice teachers repeatedly turned to neuroscience/brain research to speak an image of children as important. At one point, there was a discussion about how child care and children are not valued. This logic then leads to the notion that early childhood teachers are not valued. In an attempt to reverse this discursive rule, Ruth called on what she knew about an image of children:

... probably the most important years for a child to learn. (FG 3: 115)

A child may participate in child care up until the age of five, and these five years were spoken as the most important. It was important because during this period of life children were able to learn. Neuroscience convincingly argues for the importance of the early years, and the opportunities during this period of life (Lally, 1998; Mustard, 2002; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Child development was also located in Ruth's talk as a discourse that legitimates periods of early childhood as crucial for development and learning. The intersection of neuroscience/brain research and child development makes it possible to think of the early years as "the most important". Ruth expanded her argument for the importance of the early years, and established a hierarchy of importance:

I think with child care the window is so open for them to learn. And then you get—Grade 1, the Prep. teachers and primary school teachers are viewed as more important. And yet we've got the most important years. (FG 3: 116-119)

Again, the early years are produced as important because of the discourses of neuroscience/brain research/child development and learning. In this quest to make the early years important, she attempted to position early childhood as more important than any other period of life.

Ruth differentiates between periods of the early childhood years, making some more important than others. In her talk, Ruth drew on neuroscience/brain research to assign value and worth to the year prior to school as the most important. This fits with Elliot's (1999) graph of critical periods (see Chapter 2, Section 2.1.1).

The science of brain research, and its compelling language of critical periods, assigns power (Foucault, 1982) to this discourse, and power to the professional identity of early childhood teachers. It produces an importance and validity that shifts the work into a discursive space of specialised knowledge. Ruth drew on neuroscience/brain research, along with child development to speak the value of children and to speak child care as something more than one of its key historical origins—care (Brennan, 1998; Press, 2009; Wong, 2007).

Neuroscience/brain research produces such an irrefutable regime of truth that it is unfathomable that the work in child care is not valued. This importance and status assigned to neuroscience/brain research is consistent with "scientificity" (Lather,

2006), a Foucauldian concept in which the “measurability” (p. 786) brings a known outcome. Brain development and child development can be measured, and therefore, rationalised as a way of rendering early childhood as a high-stakes concern. If those years are so important then child care, as a place where children spend this time, is similarly high stakes. This power of scientificity produces (Foucault, 1984b) dominant ways of thinking.

The regime of truth here is that the early years are the most important, *and* further the earliest years in child care are the most important. This discursive rule in turn produces early childhood teacher professional identities as important. The neuroscience/brain research makes the early childhood teacher in child care in fact more important than the early childhood teacher, in say a school setting. The category (Davies, 2004/2006) of the “most important teacher in early childhood” validates work in child care and produces identities worthy of high status.

With the category established as early childhood teacher as the most important teacher, Claire also shared the view:

Yes a lot needs changing in the field—the recognising that we are educators.
(FG 3: 120-121)

The important early years call for equally important educators, and recognition that educators provide for these early years. Another category is thus introduced- an “early childhood teacher in child care who is an educator”. Her use of the pronoun “we” maintains a category, inclusive of early childhood teachers working in child care. In doing so, Claire and Ruth established categories within early childhood, which are assigned importance according to different contexts, and made sayable through neuroscience/brain research. Through these discursive rules there is insistence that professional identities of early childhood teachers in child care are important, and worthy of status.

Amy also drew on science to produce the early years as important:

... in reality it’s the most critical stage of life and there is so much that they have to learn. (FG 1: 177–179)

Here again, neuroscience/brain research, along with child development, makes it permissible for her to speak the importance of this period of life as a truth. The logic is that this calls for early childhood teachers because:

... they (children) need to be taught. (FG 1: 178)

The work of the early childhood teacher in child care is produced as “teaching” because the neuroscience/brain research insists that learning occurs.

The power of scientific research is also highlighted by Tegan as she speaks the importance of the early years:

... in light of research and children’s brain development and things like that [...]. I think it’s actually more important to have them in there (child care) from six weeks of age to three years of age ... (FG 4: 42-48)

“Research” makes it permissible to speak participation in child care as “more important” than being at home with a parent, because of the power/knowledge (Foucault, 1980a, 1980b) that resides with this discourse. The discourses of neuroscience and research come together to make sayable that child care is necessary for children from “six weeks of age to three years of age”. These scientific discourses insist that an early childhood teacher is necessary, in order to ensure that brain development occurs in critical periods, and that windows of opportunity are not lost. It seems, through Tegan’s logic, that the early childhood teacher, who has “expert” (Beaty, 2004) knowledge, is well positioned to do this. Without this knowledge, and without attention to the importance of the early years there is a risk, a fear, that if a child is not exposed to appropriate stimuli through an early childhood program, provided by an early childhood teacher, they may not develop as they should, meeting their development milestones at particular times. Somehow, the early childhood teacher is charged with the responsibility of developing critical periods of brain development, what Walkerdine (1990) might refer to as an “impossible fiction”. Drawing on the scientific research discourses, the early childhood teacher produces a particular child—one who is in the most important years. This attaches value to work in child care.

The power assigned through scientific discourses maintains the regime of truth that the early years are the most important, and this in turn produces child care and work in child care as valid and legitimate. This is in direct contrast with the discursive rules located elsewhere in the focus group data. At another point in the discussion, Amy and Margie insist that a child should be at home with a parent in these early years for the *same* reason—that the early years are important. Ironically, both rules emerge from neuroscience/brain research, and both produce the early

years as important. The same neuroscience/brain research discourse produces different discursive rules—one makes a case for a child staying at home with a parent, and the other insists a child should be in child care. As the preservice teachers struggled with collisions and tensions, they attempted to make sense of images of children and how these images manifest in early childhood teacher professional identities.

Scientific discourses were located in numerous places within the focus group data. Amy spoke of the learning that takes place in early childhood:

How important the early years are for children and how much they gather and discern about the world in that time. (FG 1: 219-221)

Here again, talk of the early years as important is linked now to children's learning. This is followed in Lisa's talk with her claim:

...what I'm doing is important. (FG 1: 246)

Work in child care is validated by neuroscience/brain research. This works to constitute the early years as important, and is sometimes coupled with discourses about children's learning and education. Claire suggested:

...it's important for it to be seen as an early years foundation education program and not just a child care program. (FG 3: 26-28)

While claiming the importance of the early years, Claire relegates child care to a "foundation" for education that presumably only occurs later on; however, it is this foundation that produces a program that is "not just" child care. Children who are in critical periods of brain development require more than "just" child care. They require early childhood teachers who are knowledgeable.

The science discourses of neuroscience/brain research (Lally, 1998; Mustard, 2002; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000) along with child development theories are often drawn upon as a rationale for expenditure in the early years (Dodge, 2003; Heckman, 2004). The genealogical analysis of *New Directions* (Rudd & Macklin, 2007b), in the Chapter 5, located the ways in which neuroscience/brain research/child development are drawn on to make a case for investment. As explained in Chapter 5, these discourses provide compelling arguments for the importance of the early years and have been used effectively to persuade government to increase expenditure across early childhood programs. The science makes a compelling argument to invest in the

early years (Heckman, 2006), and to elevate the importance of the early years. The preservice teachers in their talk indicate that they also access this science and development discourse as a means to explain the importance of the early years and consequently the importance of the work of the educators in those early years. At the risk of creating “a hard burden for children to carry” (Burman, 2001. p. 10), Amy and Lisa place emphasis on outcomes to be delivered by the early childhood teacher.

“Developing in all areas”—child development

In their talk, the preservice teachers frequently drew on child development, at times speaking this together with neuroscience/brain research. This talk of child development, an image of children “developing in all areas” (FG 3: 15) was also important as the preservice teachers constructed early childhood teacher professional identities.

The preservice teachers’ talk turned to the child development knowledge that they have acquired, since commencing their early childhood course:

... we see it from the more theoretical perspective now. (Peta, FG 2: 81)

Peta spoke the insights that were acquired through her course. The original views of children held by Peta and her peers were, apparently, not informed by theories. Child development is typically included in early childhood teacher preparation programs (Langford, 2005; Ryan & Grieshaber, 2005; Sumsion, 2005). According to a key teacher education textbook, child development is conceptualised in terms of “three broad domains: physical, cognitive, and emotional and social” (Berk, 2009, p. 4). There were particular units in the course that provided knowledge about children:

Especially the development unit—like I found that age so important, especially that birth to five years and working in child care centre really helped to know that as well, to be able to work with them. (Kathy, FG 2: 83–86)

Knowledge about child development is drawn on as way to both understand the importance and assign further value to the early years. In Kathy’s talk of “birth to five years”, she focused on child development theories for this age range. This logic distinguishes between the years up to the age of five, before children start school,

and the years after this point. Yet again, the years prior to school are singled out as important.

In a similar way to Tegan's logic of neuroscience/brain research to legitimate child care participation, child development was also drawn on. Beth spoke child development as reason for child care:

I believe child care is for developing in all areas- developmental areas. I think it's well needed. It's needed for later on in life. (FG 3: 15–16)

Beth returned to the important early years, spoken through child development. Child development theories work to normalise childhood (Ryan & Grieshaber, 2005; Walkerdine, 1993) through linear viewpoints about how children develop. In cognitive-developmental theory, for example, key milestones are mapped and measured as children are compared to what is considered “normal” for their stage of development. These milestones operate as regimes of truth about what children should be like at a particular age or stage of their life. These normalising devices work to produce teachers who work within such understandings and function in their roles to produce children who adhere to ages and stages of development. This calls for a teacher with technical competence, acquired through knowledge. A “technicist” aligns with a construct of professional who has knowledge and skills and is able to perform these (Sachs, 2001). In her talk, Beth spoke an image of children as important, and child development makes it permissible that child care and work in child care be valued—it is “well needed”. This is reminiscent of the analysis of *New Directions* in Chapter 5, where child care was spoken as necessary for children. Yet, in *New Directions* the importance of children, and child care, was denoted through economics, and the contributions to the “economic prosperity” of the nation. There is a disconnect between Beth's talk of children “developing in all areas” and the production of children as “economic units” in *New Directions*.

Beth also positions child care participation as beneficial for child development, and part of a broader lifelong learning discourse. This orientation focuses on the benefits of child care, so that negative outcomes are mitigated in adult life for the individual (for example, delinquency) and for society (for example, lower crime rate, better able to participate in employment and to contribute to the economy). Burman (2001, p. 10) cautions “onto the child we heap thwarted longings of decayed societies

and try to figure out something better. It's a hard burden for children to carry. Surely they should be their own future; not ours".

Early childhood was spoken by Beth as part of an ongoing educational continuum. Her talk situated early childhood teachers in the same broad category of other teachers, primary, secondary and tertiary. The children are positioned on the pathway to lifelong learning.

... lifelong learners

According to a key textbook, early childhood is a period of life that is located as part of an ongoing lifespan (Berk, 2009). After early childhood comes middle childhood, adolescence, early adulthood, and so on. In Chapter 5, in the analysis of *New Directions* (Rudd & Macklin, 2007b), early childhood was firmly positioned as an important first stage of ongoing learning. The front cover of *New Directions* depicted a series of images of children developing, seemingly on the lifelong learning continuum. An image of children as lifelong learners produces children who are developing and preparing for the next stage of learning.

Leith describes child care as:

... a facility where children are able to start the basis of their learning and development at a young age. (FG 3: 29–31)

Here, child care is foundational for children in their development, just as earlier, Claire emphasised the importance of child care. Lifelong learning and science come together to make an important space for child care to occupy. According to Leith, child care is so significant because it provides for children's development. She emphasises that it should commence early:

... that children can really get in and start that from a young age, whereas they might have a little bit more trouble if they, like myself, don't experience child care. (FG 3: 32–34)

The first phase of life, as part of a continuum of lifelong learning is so important that it warrants child care. Child care is a place where a child's developmental needs will be identified and strategies will be put in place to improve or support development. This makes the Development discourse integral to speaking about child care, and essential to work in child care. Moreover, participation in child care may prevent "trouble later in life". Child care is necessary in order to avoid

what a child might become should he/she not have access to a program. An image of children as lifelong learners calls for support of learning from an early childhood teacher. The discourse of learning/lifelong learning renders Leith's own experience where she was at home with her mother, and not in child care, as not legitimate. The early childhood teacher professional identities are elevated through the important work of commencing children on the journey of lifelong learning.

The discourses of child development and lifelong learning combine to produce child care as not only *important*, it is *necessary* for children. This regime of truth renders work in child care and the early childhood teacher professionals not only important, but also necessary, for young children. The preservice teachers spoke then of a developing child undergoing important brain growth, which was occurring in the most important early years and putting the child on the path to lifelong learning. However, this does not exhaust the discourses in play, as located in the talk of the participants. They also spoke of the competent child.

6.1.2 Children as competent and capable

Earlier in this chapter, an extract of Amy's talk was examined for her use of the scientific discourse to describe children. On another occasion in her talk, Amy described children as "competent human beings" (FG 1: 647). Amy simultaneously holds together at least two images of children. While she positions them along a continuum of development, with potential, and on a path to eventually becoming fully developed, she can also see children as already competent and capable.

Elsewhere, in other conversations, Kath draws on the discourse of children as competent and capable:

I don't think parents realise what they [children] are capable of doing (FG 2: 146-147).

Kath, the educator, has access to the discourse of child as competent and capable, whereas it seems parents do not have this specialised knowledge. That children's capabilities are underestimated, especially by parents, works to devalue children, and people who work with them. It might also be said that this not knowing works to empower Kath and her professional status, since she can appreciate an image of child as competent and capable.

Amy and Kath were not alone in the proposition that children are “competent” and “capable” — a discourse that works to assign status and importance to work with young children. Melissa also argued for an image of children as capable and complete people:

They’re people. They’re not half formed. (FG 1: 627)

Here, Melissa seems to be talking back to the developmental discourse described earlier, which is futures focussed, and sees children not for who they are, but for who they will be later. In order to resist the notion of children as not yet “complete”, she draws on more recent theorising of child development that begins with recognition of children’s capacities and strengths, not their deficits and what they cannot yet do (Bruner, 1996; Malaguzzi, 1998; Rinaldi, 2006; Vygotsky, 1978). As Amy and Melissa attempted to negotiate competing and intersecting discourses, they spoke their conviction that children are to be valued as people, for who they are, not who they might become. In *New Directions* the emphasis is on children developing, and being valued for what they may be able to contribute to the workforce and the economy in the future, not the present (see Chapter 5, Section 5.3 and Section 5.4). Again, the disconnect between children as competent people “not half formed” in the preservice teachers’ talk and the image of a child as an “economic unit” in *New Directions*.

Children as “competent human being(s)” is another current regime of truth, and Amy, Kath and Melissa appear to be comfortable with this discursive construction. The competent and capable child is a relatively new and hegemonic discourse for early childhood, though one that Amy considers “has not filtered into wider society”. According to Amy’s understanding, it is this “competent child” that should replace other earlier images, rendering them obsolete. Ryan and Grieshaber (2005, p. 6) suggest that “multiple and competing discourses” inform teaching practices, and these meanings affect “differing effects of power”. Power (Foucault, 1980a, 1980b) is assigned to “the competent child” as a new regime of truth, a new way to understand children. Amy accepts this image as “the truth”, but would not necessarily consider it a dominant discourse in a Foucauldian sense because it had not “filtered into the wider society”.

6.1.3 Children as building relationships

Relationships also featured in the ways that the preservice teachers spoke images of children. They talked of “children as building relationships”, and through this image, they produced early childhood teacher professional identities. This image of children as building relationships is examined in this section as discourses of relationships and social development are identified.

At one point, Ben drew on relationships to describe work in child care:

... you’ve got to be able to form a relationship with the children. (FG 4: 823)

Nicola agreed that:

... it’s relationships all over. (FG 4: 836)

For Ben and Nicola relationships are important, indeed “everything” in child care. Ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) is one example of a theoretical perspective that focuses on relationships. The connections the child has within a system of relationships are considered important (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The “pedagogy of relations” (Rinaldi, 2006, p. 172) involves a “dialogue and exchange” in the preschool programs of Reggio Emilia. Relationships between child and teacher and between parent and teacher are viewed as central to early childhood education (Rinaldi, 2006). An image of children as building relationships, calls for an early childhood teacher who knows about relationships, and their importance.

Beth spoke about the relationship between a parent and a teacher, attributing a child’s learning and development to this relationship:

... I strongly believe that if that bond or relationship is not there [between parent and teacher/child care worker] then the child’s not going to learn—they won’t develop any skills [...] So it’s really important that the relationship is built and everyone’s open and comfortable and flexible I suppose. (FG 3: 87–92)

Beth referred to parent teacher relationships and considered these as fundamental for children’s learning to occur. This places a child’s learning and development as contingent on a strong relationship between parent and teacher.

In the “pedagogy of relationships” (Rinaldi, 2006, p. 113), relationships are the basis for programming and practice in early childhood. If a child is to be a builder of

relationships, then this calls for a teacher who is well versed in ways of supporting this relationship building. Margie put relationships as something essential to include in a teacher education course:

you could do a whole year's worth of study on relationships to learn about it but you don't really learn a lot and I mean it's a lot of practice just doing it, but being able to forge relationships with a lot of different people. (FG 1: 581–584)

As she elevated relationships to paramount importance, Margie first proposed that relationships could be a substantial matter to be studied in her course. But then she corrected herself. She differentiated between what can be learnt in a teacher education course, in this case about relationships, and the necessity to “practice just doing it”. For her, relationships are so important, and yet at the same time such a complex, difficult area to gain mastery of, that Margie suggests that even a “whole year's worth of study on relationships” would not be adequate to gain knowledge and to be able to put this knowledge into practice. There is also acknowledgement that these relationships need to be made with “a lot of different people”—children, parents and staff for example. Thus, a key part of being an early childhood professional is knowing how to build and create numerous positive relationships, particularly with children and parents.

This section has examined the preservice teachers' talk for the ways in which they spoke images of children through relationships. Talk of relationships as an important factor in professional identities works to disrupt the more traditional emphasis on the child as individual, and recognises instead, the more complex ecology of the early childhood education and care context.

Developing socially

Since the development discourse is so all-encompassing, it was possible for the social development of children to be accommodated in the preservice teachers' talk. As they spoke of relationships between children, they were able to connect this with the importance of children's development. This section examines social development as it was spoken in the focus group discussions. As Jill discussed the purpose of child care, she described as a place for children to be with other children so that they are able to develop socially:

...a great place for children to go and socialise with other children. (FG 4: 14–15)

When children's social development is considered, this makes it possible to speak child care as "a great place". This in turn enables the early childhood teacher to carry elevated status because children need child care to develop socially. Moreover, children need teachers who have knowledge of social development and the importance of building relationships with their peers. A key definer of being professional is having expert knowledge (Yinger, 2005).

According to a key student textbook, one of the key domains of a child's development is social development, made especially important in early childhood because of the focus on peer relationships (Berk, 2009). Talk of social development and socialisation produce images of children as social and in need of peer interaction. Elsewhere in the focus group discussions, Leith spoke of the importance of social development and socialisation:

... especially with social interaction and things like that. (FG 3: 31–32)

She considered that one of the consequences of her not having attended child care was that she missed out on social interaction:

I'm one of seven children and my mum was a stay at home mum so I didn't actually go to child care at all or kindy or anything like that. So I kind of didn't get that kind of social interaction as everyone else did. (FG 3: 270–273)

Ironically, although Leith had six siblings to interact with, it seems that this did not constitute the "social interaction" that she would have experienced had she been to child care. It is possible here that Leith's professional knowledge has enabled her to appreciate the value of social interaction and, at the same time, constrained this awareness to an understanding that social interaction amongst young children is exclusive to early childhood programmes, and child care. Such value assigned to social development can only, apparently, be experienced in an early childhood program, and in this case, child care. As a regime of truth socialisation in child care becomes valued and spoken as an essential part of the work of an early childhood teacher in child care. This produces work in child care as important work—where a child's social developmental needs will be met through relationships with peers.

The “certain age” of three

In their talk, the preservice teachers provided qualifiers for particular ages that children benefit more from participation in child care. At one point, Jill and Rian discussed the importance of social development, referring to children’s ages as important:

I also agree with Jill in the respect that I think it’s great for social, like to build children’s social skills ... I think it’s great in the respect of social skills but I believe that of a certain age. (Rian, FG 4: 22–23)

There was agreement between Jill and Rian that child care provides children with opportunities for social development. However, Rian adds a qualifier that social development occurs after a particular age. Child development theory teaches that children attain key milestones at particular ages (Berk, 2009). Theories about play for example suggest that children interact with their peers, or “co-exist during the preschool years” (p. 605), around three to five years. Prior to this age social development theories or “peer sociability” constructs children as relatively unaware of other children, with the first two years of life seeing “limited, peer sociability” (p. 605). Through this understanding, social interaction with other children is not as important for babies and young children. For Rian, child care is important for children over a “certain age”, at least when it comes to peer-relationships and social development. For early childhood teachers’ identities, this is potentially problematic. If prior to a certain age children do not need to be with other children, do not need developmentally to be in child care, then logic would suggest that younger children do not need an early childhood teacher. Such discursive conditions render the early childhood teacher in child care, for children under a certain age, unnecessary.

At another point in the preservice teachers’ talk three years is nominated as a key age for which child care becomes acceptable because of the socialisation that is part of a child care experience:

If I had a baby right now it [child care] would be on a needs base. But if I had a three-year-old, it would be used as a social base. (Nicola, FG 4: 38–39)

Nicola placed much importance on child development theory, and drew on this to produce child care as legitimate. However, social development distinguishes children’s needs at different ages, and through this logic child care becomes acceptable only after the age of three. Prior to that, child care is only legitimated if it

is absolutely needed. Child development, particularly social development has created “a rupture ... between the first two to three years of life and the second three” (Rinaldi, 2006, p. 106). Social development with other children is spoken as not as important for babies, despite a growing body of research calling for a focus on relationships between children from birth (Gandini & Pope Edwards, 2001; Rinaldi, 2006).

Clearly, three years of age is some kind of threshold for child care use. It adds to the discursive rules that child care is suitable for children as it meets a social need, though this is only the case when a child is older than three. For Nicola, the use of the word “but” suggests that having her baby in child care would be something she would do reluctantly, and only if “needed” (whatever constitutes “needed” here). She was comfortable with the idea that a child (of hers) would be in child care from three years for social reasons—presumably, this is not needed, but rather, a deliberate choice. The course structure in early childhood teacher education is frequently shaped according to this segregation by ages, with birth to two/three being distinct (Watson & Axford, 2008). The child care field experience unit in which the preservice teachers in the focus groups were enrolled (see discussion in Chapter 4, Section 4.6.2; also see Appendix B course summary sheet) focuses on birth to three years. One participant, Melissa noted that in her course, at this stage, with one year to graduation, and almost three years passed:

We haven’t done subjects that are specifically focused on the birth to three (yet). (FG 1: 207–208)

To date, it appears that her knowledge had been built through understandings of older children.

So far in this section, a number of images of children have been located in the preservice teachers’ talk. These images produce regimes of truth about child care, and work in child care. Through these images, the early childhood teacher professional identities are constituted.

Needing attachment

As the preservice teachers further set about speaking the importance of relationships, they drew on other discourses at play. Another image that they spoke was an image of children in need of attachment. This was identified in the data as a

child needing to be with a mother/parent at home. Through this image, they produced professional identities of early childhood teachers. When focus group talk turned to child care/child care usage, the preservice teachers spoke preference for a child to be at home with a parent:

... obviously they're still young and need to spend time at home. (Amy, FG 1: 68–69)

... some people think children shouldn't be in child care and that their place is at home with their family. (Ruth, FG 3: 576–577)

I think they [parents] use it too much. (Melissa, FG 1: 34–35)

Amy, Ruth and Melissa spoke the desire for children to be at home with a parent, particularly when “they’re still young”. Whilst not suggesting an age, it appears that when they are older, then participation in an early childhood program would become more acceptable. Consistent with this logic, child attachment theory purports that children benefit from a relationship with a primary caregiver with whom they form secure attachment (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Berk, 2009). Attachment theory forms the basis for much debate about whether child care for children, particularly babies, is detrimental. Early attachment theory research has suggested that “2- and 3- year olds may interpret the long, daily separations from the mother, implicit in full-time day care, as rejection or abandonment” (Ainsworth et al., 1978, p. 210). These early views on attachment have endured. Melissa elaborated on child care use and turns to attachment theory:

So as much as child care workers are important to a child in attachment and as much as a child care worker can be loving and do things right, it's not the same as being a parent. (FG 1: 38–40)

There is acknowledgement that a child is able to form an attachment with a child care worker, and that this relationship “can be loving”. Love has been linked with nurturance and is “evident” in physical behaviours such as “cuddling, hugging”, as well as by providing comfort, engaging in play, “verbally expressing love” and praising (Berk, 2009, p. 435). Even if these, and perhaps other “right” things are done in the building of attachments and relationships between child care worker and child, this is spoken as “not the same as being a parent”. Melissa spoke child care as able to provide a level of attachment and relationship between child and teacher as

important. However, this is not as appropriate as what a parent is able to provide in this relationship, and thus fulfil a child's needs in line with attachment theory.

Nicola also expressed her views on a child being at home with his/her mother:

... mothers were dropping their kids off at six and picking them up at six
when I actually believed that a mother should be home with their baby...
(FG 4: 566–569)

Whilst she drew on attachment, she also drew on maternalism, suggesting that a child should be at home with their mother. Maternalism pervades constructions of early childhood, both for notions of children needing to be with their mothers, and the nature of work in early childhood (Ailwood, 2008b; Moss, 2006; Osgood, 2012). Here, in Melissa's talk maternalism is located as a discourse that makes sayable a child should be at home with his/her mother. At the same time, she introduces other discursive rules: the hours of attendance at child care, it seems, are important. Long hours of attendance in child care, where a child attend for up to twelve hours a day, do not seem to be acceptable to her. The hours of attendance act here as a qualifier and are spoken as problematic, not just the use of child care. This logic allows the regime of truth that part-time child care is acceptable because it affords a best of both worlds. This arrangement holds together in tension attachment theory/maternalism (that render mother/parent-child relationships important) and child development/neuroscience (that render the early childhood professional identity as needed and legitimated).

The image of children being at home with their mothers, and the discursive rules for child care attendance—what is permissible, what is not—were something that concerned Tegan. When the issue of hours spent in child care was raised, Tegan questioned the professional identity of the child care worker:

... the problem is I reckon at least half of them (staff who work in child care)
have that view. You hear them at lunchtime: "Can you believe that mum
comes here, drops their kid off at six o'clock" or "She's not even working".
(FG 4: 572–575)

While Tegan acknowledged the fit between attachment theory and maternalism discourses at the same time she was troubled by staff in child care who disapproved of children spending long hours in child care. The judgements made of parents by staff, it seems, work to establish rules that enable child care to be more or less

acceptable and permissible. There is an attempt to draw on an understanding that one of the *problems* with children being in care for long hours is that even the staff who are working there do not believe that the children should be there.

Jill also admits to negative feelings about child care “I have issues with child care centres obviously” (FG 4: 616). However, the talk of the need for professional early childhood teachers to cope with these feelings led her to focus on what she needs to:

get over my own thing and be there for the kids. (FG 4: 617–618)

The reason for children to be at home with a parent, preferably their mother, appears to be used as a rationale in the same way as the early years are important years. The discourses that make this desirable and permissible are development, attachment theory and maternalism. It appears that children, from a very young age, need child care for brain development. At the same time, they need to be at home for secure attachment. A parent/mother is best placed to provide for the child’s needs. As the preservice teachers navigate through these competing discourses and attempt to make sense of child care, it is little wonder that confusion marks their considerations around their future work as early childhood professionals.

The regime of truth that is spoken is that the preservice teachers know that a child should be at home with his/her mother. Part of being professional is to fulfil the requirements of a job (Yinger, 2005). In addition, a requirement of being an early childhood teacher in child care is to look after young children, even though, at least for Jill and Tegan, they think children should be at home with their mother/parent. This is a departure from Tegan’s previous insistence that children should be in child care because of the neuroscience/brain research (see Section 6.1.1). The collision between attachment, maternalism and neuroscience/brain research calls for Tegan to hold these two competing discourses in tension together, where both are necessary and both are true (Haraway, 1991). One way to come to terms with this contradiction is to seek a regime of truth that positions part-time child care as acceptable.

6.1.4 Children learning through play

Play was located across the focus group data, with the preservice teachers referring to play in five out of the eight core focus group questions. In their talk, the preservice teachers often spoke “play” and “learn” together. In the fourth image of

children that was located in the talk-as-text focus groups, children learning through play is examined.

The preservice teachers produced images of children learning through play, elevating play as an essential element to early childhood education, and at the same time elevating their knowledge of play as an indicator of their specialisation and expertise. Just as Claire insisted that the teacher is providing “not just a child care programme”, so too part of the preservice teachers’ production of professional identities was dependent on the notion of play being more than play.

The concept of play is inscribed in early childhood “as a sacred right of all children” (Cannella, 1997, p. 124). Play is woven so tightly into the fabric of early childhood that there is an assumption that play is “beneficial to all children” (Grieshaber & McArdle, 2010, p. 1). Through their talk, the preservice teachers spoke play as important. Nicola “was big on play” (FG 4: 1028) prior to commencing her studies, and apparently before she “knew anything” (FG 4: 1028). At this early stage, as a preservice teacher, Nicola was aware of some of the importance attached to play in early childhood education. Even people outside the profession, who do not *know anything*, know that play is important.

The importance of play was attached to the equally important science of child development:

I know children develop through play. (Kath, FG 2: 47)

Kath was not the only preservice teacher who validated play through the discourse of child development, though her comment stood out for the authority assigned to play. By speaking play together with development, she produced play as important—for children and for early childhood teachers. Hand-in-hand with the scientificity (Lather, 2006) in development comes the knowledge that:

they [children] actually do learn—the play based learning. (Lisa, FG 1: 205–206).

Play on its own may not carry the status. It appears that the important point to be made here is that play is more than play, it is learning. Play is validated through the learning that occurs. The “most dominant influences” (Ailwood, 2003a, p. 290) on discourses of play comes from development theorists, “Piaget, and Vygotsky, with significant reference to Erikson and Kohlberg” (p. 290). The DAP “bible”

(Grieshaber, 2008, p. 508) is attributed with influencing the developmental discourse of play being hegemonically taken up (Ailwood, 2003a). When play is defined as the “primary vehicle” (Bredekamp & Copple, 2009, p. 3) through which children learn, play is placed at the core of children’s development, and logically, at the core of the work of the early childhood teacher. The regime of truth that play is important is sayable *because* children develop and learn through play. Power and importance is assigned to play because of the science of development and learning (Foucault, 1980a, 1980b). A professional early childhood teacher must know about play, and must realise the science of learning through play. Everyone knows about play and young children, but what makes a professional is the knowledge about play that produces learning for children.

Although play was spoken as a type of mantra with the participants in the focus group, it was still problematised. There were times in the conversations when some of the participants struggled with the unquestioned acceptance of play in early childhood. With play firmly harnessed to pedagogy and curriculum in early childhood (Perry, 1998), its value is not always understood:

you hear a parent say “oh my child’s not going to get involved in one of those curriculum [*sic*] based on all that play shit”. (Tegan, FG 4: 997–999)

Tegan was not alone in her trepidation about play. Ben also resisted the notion of learning through play:

You can’t just say they learn through play. (FG 4: 1008)

Both Tegan and Ben are aware that these ideas of play can be misunderstood, and can work to undervalue what they do. There is nervousness around advocating for play, on its own, and they need to legitimise it.

As the preservice teachers worked to speak the importance of learning through play, and early childhood teacher professional identities, they spoke other qualifiers that further define play in early childhood. A child’s level of engagement in play aligns approaches to learning in early childhood. Piaget’s (1955) constructivist theory and Montessori’s programs (1914) programs both proposed the use of materials that would engage children, and support their learning. “Engagement” is one of the characteristics of play (Monighan-Nourot, Scales, Van Hoorn, & Almay, 1987, p. 15). The supposition associated with play is that “children engage

instinctively in creative problem solving” (Grieshaber & McArdle, 2010, p. 7). The term play came under scrutiny, signalled by Peta’s talk:

it’s done through play and activities that will interest them and entertain them. (FG 2: 75–77)

The focus in both is on development and learning, with yet another example of play attached to learning and development. However, at the same time, refined images of children are produced as those who are engaged and entertained through play. The playfulness and “pleasure and fun of play” (Ailwood, 2003a, p. 291) becomes more nuanced, and the early childhood professional produces a particular child who is kept busy and active. Even when the preservice teachers add qualifiers to the mantra of play, and insist that the concept is more complex than simply play, they do not move out of the developmental discourse. Child development and learning assign validity to play—there is a tangible outcome. Anyone can play, but an early childhood teacher has the knowledge and skills to produce play for children as development and learning.

The struggle for the participants, reconciling the freedom of play with a more professional approach, makes play more serious. Even when they add qualifiers to the mantra of play, and insist that the concept is more complex than simply play, they do not move out of the developmental discourse. Kath recalled her experience working in child care:

... we just let them go and watch them. (FG 2: 49–50)

The notion that children should have “freedom to play” (Grieshaber & McArdle, 2010, p. 3) comes from a romantic construction of the child as innocent, proposed by Rousseau (James et al., 1998). Yet, play was also spoken as problematic when there is “no guidance” (FG 2: 49–50). Kath set about speaking play as being something more than a teacher standing back to enable free play. The early childhood teacher needs to do more than let children

play and ... stand there with our coffees and watch them. (FG 2: 53–54)

Free play diminishes the role of the early childhood teacher, and development and learning produce a professional identity that is important, knowledgeable, and with specialised expertise, to enable a particular sort of play that is at once a learning experience and engaging.

Images of children learning through play necessitates more than images of free play, so another qualifier is turned to denote the type of play that is desirable for the preservice teachers. It seems that:

play can be structured to be more beneficial. (Kath, FG 2: 47–49)

Scaffolding is a specialised term that signifies structure, a concept that otherwise seems to contradict the freedom and pleasure of play; however, the term also manages to soften the role for the professionals, wherein they are not actually teaching but scaffolding. The term scaffolding signifies that children build on knowledge and skills that they already have (Bruner, 1966) and assumes a partnership between the teacher and child (Berk & Winsler, 1995). The structure legitimates play because learning apparently occurs. Maeve also spoke a lack of guidance in play as problematic especially when there is “no scaffolding” (FG 2: 51) discursive rules explained for defining what is “proper” play for children, and for an early childhood teacher to engage in (McArdle & McWilliam, 2005).

Through their talk of play, the preservice teacher produced early childhood professional identities as knowledgeable. Knowledge of child development enables a teacher to provide a particular type of structured play that promotes learning and development. Child development was so predominant in the participants’ talk, suggesting it was “almost impossible to talk about play without development in early childhood” (Grieshaber & McArdle, 2010, p. 6). When an early childhood teacher introduces structure into play, it promotes learning through play, and produces the work of the early childhood teacher as legitimated. Because of the learning, and the science, the professional identity is afforded power (Foucault, 1984b), status and importance.

It might be possible for people who are not in the field of early childhood to value play, but not to know the special things about play that the early childhood professional knows: children develop through play. Some people who are not early childhood professionals do not understand learning through play, and mistakenly think that the children are only playing and not learning. This is not sayable and is seen as an affront to the professionalism of early teachers. The slippage into child development and learning does not. The preservice teachers’ insistence on the importance of play produces their expertise and knowledge, and this is a key part of being professional (Sachs, 2001; Yinger, 2005).

In this chapter, so far different images of children that were located in the preservice teachers' talk have been examined: children in "the most important years", where neuroscience/brain research/child development and lifelong learning reside; children as competent; children as building relationships; and children learning through play. This list captures some of the discourses in play that were accessed by the preservice teachers when asked about early childhood teacher professional identities. In their talk, the preservice teachers spoke of their frustration that these images are not understood more widely outside early childhood:

People don't really understand there is underlying education. (Peta, FG 2: 74)

In particular, the knowledge that the early years are important is spoken by the preservice teachers as known in the early childhood field, though not by parents. The following section examines the preservice teachers talk for how they spoke parents as not having the same professional knowledge as they themselves had (recently) acquired through their course of study.

6.1.5 Images of children who need quality

When discourses compete and collide, it is sometimes necessary to call on another discourse that will override or make sense of the confusions. "Quality" is one such discourse that appeared in the focus group discussions. A child "in the most important years", "developing in all areas", needed quality. The regime of truth produced was that child care needed quality—a useful term that could be called on to smooth over ruptures. Different constructions of children called for a number of rules determining conditions for using child care. These discursive rules produced child care usage as more, or less, acceptable.

When Margie spoke of children, she coupled this talk with the discourse of quality, introducing a further contingency:

But I think also that it serves a profound purpose for young children in their development. In particular high quality care serves an amazing purpose in so many ways for young children and is a good start for young children. (FG 1: 73–76)

Through her talk, Margie shifted the image of child care into a discursive space where the focus is on children, and their needs. In Margie's talk, a number of

discourses are located: child development, lifelong learning and neuroscience come together to enable her to speak the utter importance of the early years. And child care is an appropriate match for this importance, contingent on it being quality child care. Thus, the early childhood teacher professional identities are positioned as important when the work is in a quality child care centre. The early childhood teacher has knowledge about child development/ neuroscience and power is now attached to the degree of quality.

In the quality discourse, the early childhood teacher professional identities are spoken as utterly, unquestionably important. One rule that emerged was that child care was acceptable, and participation in child care was valuable for children *if* it is quality:

... I think this country needs to go a long way in providing more high quality child care because the benefits of high quality child care are proven and the negative impacts of low quality care are also proven. So I think we need a lot more high quality child care for all children in the country, not just for working parents. (Margie, FG 1: 76–84)

Leaving aside discourses of neuroscience/brain research or child development, Margie's talk here is a shift to the question of access. If it is taken for granted that child care can benefit children's development, then all children should benefit, "not just for working parents". Contrary to Nicola's distinction of the "needs basis", Margie's proposal was that all children benefit—the contingency here is the degree of quality.

The call for universal high quality child care is not new, and certainly echoes proposals in *New Directions*. There is a growing body of empirical research being accumulated that links quality in early childhood with the benefits of child care use (Ishimine et al., 2009). Neuroscience studies claim that neural pathways are shaped through quality early years experiences (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2007; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Quality experiences in the early years have the potential to impact on a child's ongoing learning and development throughout life (Schweinhart et al., 2005). Through this logic, when child care is of high quality the child care experience becomes beneficial and important for young children.

At the same time as drawing on science to illuminate the importance of child care, Margie turns to child care being “negative” for children if it is considered “low quality”. This logic requires quality in child care to be measured and deemed as high quality or low quality. With child care as high quality, it is sayable that child care is beneficial. Thus, the early childhood teacher professional identities are constituted as providing something valuable to children, to families, and to the broader society.

Melissa also calls on Australia/the government to bring about changes to child care, and it seems that quality is what will make child care more acceptable:

... [in] this country [it] seems a lot of child care centres aren’t high quality at all and it’s really disappointing because the parents have no other option but to send their children there. (FG 1: 105–107)

Parental participation in paid work has been attributed, at least partially, for an increase in child care usage and the number of child care centres in Australia (ABS, 2011b). Melissa lamented that with the increased number of child care centres that many “aren’t high quality”. Her logic becomes that parents “have no other option” than to access child care centres that are not of high quality. This marks a departure from Tegan’s logic in the previous section where it was “on a parents back” to be knowledgeable and find a child care centre with qualified staff. Melissa’s logic is that this is not a parent’s fault because they have no other option than to settle for sub-standard child care.

The quality discourse produces a “hero”—an early childhood teacher, who provides a valuable program, which all children need. This hero has the power to save children (and their parents) from what fates may await. The possible fates include a child who may not succeed (according to outcomes-based education and lifelong trajectories); a girl with sisters and brothers who misses out on social interaction; a family who may not care for a child; and a society saved from children who may grow up to be delinquent. A child care worker becomes a possible rescuer—from what might have been. In logic reminiscent of *New Directions* children are spoken as in need of quality, of early childhood programs to save them from what they may become (see Chapter 5, Section 5.5).

If child care is beneficial for all children, then work in child care is legitimately valued, and valuable. Over the course of the discussion, Amy shifted from an

insistence that child care is for parents, and acknowledged its importance for children—adding the qualifier that it is quality care:

... when children are enrolled in a quality child care facilities and there's quality programs being implemented that they do benefit from it... (FG 1: 65–67)

Quality provides a validation for child care; it allows Amy to speak participation or enrolment in child care as a positive because the quality child care programs are beneficial for children. One frame for explaining quality is through two broad categories of “structural” and “process” quality (Ishimine et al., 2009). Structural elements include physical environments, curriculum, staff qualifications, the duration of the program and staff to child ratios. Amy's talk of “quality facilities” aligns with structural orientations. Process elements of quality refer to interactions between staff, between staff and children, relationships between children, relationships between staff and families, and approaches to teaching and pedagogy (Ishimine et al., 2009). A quality centre becomes more than babysitting, and becomes important for children. This logic enables early childhood teacher professional identities to be produced as worthy and validated. Quality is spoken as a regime of truth for legitimating child care use, and producing important early childhood teachers.

Despite the complexities around quality as a construct (Dahlberg et al., 2007; Penn, 2011b), it is drawn on as a powerful justification for child care use, particularly in terms of benefits for children. As such, the quality discourse makes it sayable that participation in quality child care is beneficial for children. The images of children denoted in this chapter, children in the most important years, children as competent, children as building relationships, and children learning through play, intersect with quality. These images of children are contingent on quality child care. Moreover, the intersections between these images and quality produce early childhood teacher professional identities as validated and potentially of high status. An early childhood teacher, who offers a quality program, or works in a quality centre, produces quality child care that is better for children, and the identity of this teacher becomes important.

The quality in early childhood settings has been directly linked to the qualifications and quality of educators who work in these settings (Sylva et al.,

2004). *New Directions* worked to establish this connection. It is almost unthinkable, currently, to contemplate a child care centre being described as high quality, without at least one qualified teacher on staff.

6.2 PARENTS WHO DO NOT “GET IT”

Parents are mentioned numerous times in the preservice teachers’ talk as not knowing and not recognising how important early childhood is. The images of children produced through neuroscience/brain research/child development assign high importance to the early years. This importance elevates the status for early childhood teacher professional identities. There was insistence in the preservice teachers’ talk that the early years be recognised as important. After the conversation has focused on valuing early childhood, child development and play, Maeve spoke parents’ lack of understanding:

I still don’t think parents get it. (FG 2: 444)

The regimes of truth that circulate to produce images of children as important and in need of an early childhood, are not, it seems, known to parents. Thus, the early childhood teacher professional identities become not valued because of the lack of understanding of the truth about the value of the early years.

Meg also drew on this logic, expressing frustration that parents do not have the same understanding of the early years:

I don’t think parents in this day and age have the time and don’t understand the importance of it – to be able to spend time with their child and develop those skills for later on in life. (FG 3: 18–20)

The assumption is that parents do not “understand the importance” of the early years- through discourses of neuroscience,/brain research/child development and lifelong learning. As a preservice early childhood teacher, Meg has knowledge about the importance of the early years, and through this understanding of children, she positions herself within a category (Davies, 2004/2006) of “teacher-expert”. At the same time, she positions parents in category of “parent as non-expert”. Meg speaks the lack of parent’s understanding as problematic—the early childhood teacher knows how important it is “to spend time” with a child. The early childhood teacher has the expert knowledge, known to them, but not to others. Such skill and knowledge is commensurate with “being” professional (Yinger, 2005).

Though is not only about being here and now and for Meg the time spent with children is an investment so that children are prepared and have “skills for later in life”. Such logic draws on child development as an understanding that children are developing along a continuum, and that experiences in early childhood will prepare children for learning and “become”. This logic echoes the discourse of “lifelong learning” in *New Directions*, where there is a commensurate focus on children “becoming” (see discussion in Chapter 5, Section 5.3.1).

Jill also speaks the importance of parents knowing how important the early years are:

If you're a parent that's diligent and understands ... how your child grows up, you might go to play groups and stuff. (FG 4: 71–74)

This construction of a parent who “understands” neuroscience and child development, and therefore, knows what to provide for children, includes them arranging for their child a combination of time at home and going to “playgroups and stuff”. This compromise is spoken as providing children with an alternative to child care. Here, social development again emerges as important for young children, and parents are assigned the responsibility to ensure that children have these experiences. If parents knew how important the early years were then they might take steps to access support for a child's development.

The responsibility of a parent to know how important the early years are and to ensure that a child's needs are met is located elsewhere in the talk:

I don't think parents realise what they (children) are capable of doing. (Kath, FG 2: 146–147)

Parents are positioned as not having the necessary knowledge of how important the early years are and not knowing about child development. Through her talk, Kath establishes a category (Davies, 1993) of “teacher who knows” and positions the parents in a category of “parent who does not know”. By producing early childhood teacher professional identities as knowledgeable there is power assigned. Knowledge attributes power and the intersection of power/knowledge assign importance. The early childhood teacher is constituted as worthy and legitimate. Moreover, this worth and legitimacy is produced through the category of parent who does not have this knowledge and does not understand.

For Tegan, the early years are so important that children should be in child care (see discussion in Section 6.1.1). She continues with this logic and develops a regime of truth that parents have responsibility to access a child care centre where the image of a child in the most important years is supported. A centre that supports this image will have, using Tegan's logic, qualified early childhood teachers:

... it's on the parents to really check out the child care centre where their children are going and make sure they are university-trained, qualified people that know what they're doing ... (FG 4: 49–52)

In Tegan's talk, the university-qualified teacher would have knowledge about early childhood, and in particular, the neuroscience/brain research she had previously referred to earlier in this chapter. A degree-qualified teacher who knows "what they're doing" should be providing a program for children in child care. The regime of truth produced is that an early childhood teacher who is university trained is necessary in the early years, and parent should know that. She goes on to reiterate that choosing a child care centre that is suitable is a responsibility of parents:

It all comes down to the parents taking on—instead of using the blasé, "oh I just need someone to take care of my kids" and the dumping ground ... A parent that really wants to look into it and use it in terms of, well, my child is going to develop and have the most development, both cognitively, socially, emotionally, in that first three years of life ... then it's on the parents' back to really ... I say it's at the moment on the parents' back because we all know there are qualified people out there... (FG 4: 54–59)

Tegan's frustration with parents' "blasé" approach to choosing child care further highlights the lack of understanding of how important the early years are. Without this attention to choosing a centre, she constructs parents' use of child care as a somewhere to put their children whilst they work, or possibly do other things. Tegan returned to science, this time turning to child development theory, to validate the early years as important. Science—neuroscience—makes it sayable that the first three years of life are the most important, and a parent should know this. The power (Foucault, 1980a) assigned to discourses of child development and neuroscience is yet again so productive that it constitutes the early years as irrefutably important. It is frustrating to the preservice teachers that parents do not know and acknowledge this.

The responsibility to check and ensure that a child care centre has university-qualified staff providing the program lies with parents. In her attempts to produce child care as important education and learning and teachers as important educators, she looks to parents for why these “games of truth” (Foucault, 1990b, p. 9) might not be taken up. The regimes of truth that Tegan speaks work to produce the early childhood teacher professional identities as an important qualified person, worthy of recognition. The preservice teacher talk of qualifications was located across the focus group discussions and is examined closely in the following chapter.

Relationships with parents and building respectful, reciprocal relationships is key the work of an early childhood teacher (Hill et al., 2005; Rinaldi, 2006). A focus on shared expertise, with acknowledgment of what both parent and teacher bring to the relationship is proposed by Hughes and MacNaughton (1999) as a way of building such a relationship. At the same time, the construction of an early childhood teacher as “expert” (Beaty, 2004) positions the teacher with specialised knowledge, one of the key denoters of being professional (Yinger, 2005).

6.3 PRODUCING EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER PROFESSIONAL IDENTITIES AS “HEROIC VICTIM”

An ironic category that was read in the preservice teachers’ images of children was early childhood teacher as “heroic victim”. An early childhood teacher is produced as a hero—the regime of truth is that the work of a teacher is important for children. The scientificity of the early years—learning through play, neuroscience and child development—competes and collides to the produce the early childhood teacher as important. The teacher is essential for the scientific importance of the early years. As a hero, the early childhood teacher will rescue and ensure that each of these needs is met.

Yet, there is a disconnect between the importance of the early years and the different constructions of children located in the preservice teachers’ talk. Other regimes of truth are spoken. Children are “not half formed” and need to be acknowledged as people, young children, who have a right to be free and enjoy childhood, without pressures of becoming developed. Children need strong relationships and attachment with their mothers/parents. This logic renders child care, and the early childhood teacher as not necessary. Additionally, parents “do not get it” and people “who do not understand” produce early childhood teacher

professional identities as actually not necessary and not important. Thus, the early childhood teacher is a *victim*, who does important work in the early years—though work that is not understood, not valued, and perhaps, not even necessary.

Figure 6.3 captures the competing and colliding discourses that produce the early childhood teacher as heroic victim.

Hero		Victim
Most important years		Ambivalence/negativity about
Specialist knowledge:		children in child care:
neuroscience/child	<i>and</i>	“I’m not big on child care”
development/competent/		Children to enjoy childhood:
play/attachment		not “becoming” into an adult
“Expert”/qualified		Teacher not required
early childhood teacher		Parents should be caring for their
		children
		Parents not knowing

Figure 6.3. Producing early childhood teacher professional identities as “heroic victim”.

The construction of children as free, playful and innocent, and therefore not in need of education and learning, and parents not actually buying into the neuroscience/brain research, is in tension with the utter importance of the early years. The heroic victim brings together the image of the child (neuroscience/child development) that insists that young children’s early years are critical in their development, with the image of the child as free, playful and innocent, and therefore not yet in need of education, learning, nor a teacher.

The early childhood teacher in child care as heroic victim is captured in an image Figure 6.4. Lady Penelope is character in the 1960s television series, “The Thunderbirds” (Bentley, 2000). She is a hero in Thunderbirds International Rescue – an important member of an organisation that assists people in danger. The Superman insignia emblazoned on her chest symbolises her heroism. In this image, from the episode “The Perils of Penelope” (Bentley, 2000, p. 75) at the same time as being a hero, Lady Penelope is a victim. Strapped to the railway line, she awaits her fate from the oncoming Anderbad Express train – her situation is grim. In this “perilous position” (p. 75) Lady Penelope, like the early childhood teacher in child care category produced in this chapter, is a heroic victim.



Figure 6.4. Producing the early childhood teacher in child care as “heroic victim”.

(Source: Google images)

6.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This is the second of three data chapters. It has examined data generated through focus groups with preservice teachers. This chapter drew on the ways that the participants spoke images of children. The discourses that were accessible competed, collided and connected to form regimes of truth that produced early childhood teacher professional identities.

Through the preservice teachers’ talk of neuroscience and child development, it was sayable that the early childhood years are “the most important”, and that during this time, children are “developing in all areas”. The power (Foucault, 1980a, 1980b) assigned through these discourses produced the early childhood teacher as important. Yet, there was consensus and dissensus as other images of children—needing attachment (with a mother/parent) and learning through free play—did not actually require an early childhood teacher. Moreover, the frustration on the part of the preservice teachers that parents “do not get it” and that people do not understand, challenged the need for an early childhood teacher in the child care. The constitution of early childhood teacher identities was not straightforward and there were tensions as the preservice teachers attempted to hold together competing and colliding discourses. Yet, there was “pleasure of confusing identities” (Haraway, 1991), and this approach to reading the data enabled close attention to the struggles—the contingencies, deviations and reversals—in the talk.

One way of reading the struggles in the preservice teachers’ talk was to look to irony (Rorty, 1989), and through this process, the ironic category of heroic victim emerged. This category was held together competing discourses: the importance of

early childhood and early childhood teachers, and the ambivalence about children being in child care and being at home with a parent.

The following chapter, Chapter 7, continues to examine the talk-as-text data, within a conceptual structure of images of child care.

Chapter 7: Producing Early Childhood Teacher Professional Identities Through Talk-as-Text: Focus Groups with Preservice Teachers (Part 2)

Chapter 7 is the second of two chapters examining the data generated from the focus groups with preservice teachers. In Chapter 6, a reading of the talk-as-text data investigated how the preservice teachers produced early childhood teacher professional identities through talk of images of children. A “redescription” (Rorty, 1989) of data, with a focus on irony (Haraway, 1991; Rorty, 1989) as a rhetorical device, enabled the intersections of discourses to be examined, and heroic victim was suggested as an ironic category for describing a way of being an early childhood teacher. Chapter 7 continues the process of redescription, and again draws on irony to re-read the data, but this time, attention is focused on talk of child care.

Early childhood is a field made up of a number of different contexts, including child care, kindergarten/preschool and lower primary. These contexts represent some of the career possibilities for early childhood teachers who hold a university degree. A key origin of child care has been to provide care for children so that their parents, predominantly mothers, were able to engage in paid work (Brennan, 1998; Dahlberg & Moss, 2005; McBride, 2000; Penn, 2011a; Wong, 2006). The provision of child care as a service has enabled parents to engage in roles outside of providing care for their children (Baxter, Hewitt & Haynes, 2008). The care discourse situates child care as a service to families, and at the same time, works to fulfil a desire by government to increase participation in the workforce, thereby supporting economic growth. This positioning of child care is consistent with analysis of *New Directions* (Rudd & Macklin, 2007b) in this thesis (see Chapter 5). Other discourses have also worked to shape images of child care. Philanthropy, maternalism and attachment theory, as examples, have left discursive traces that shape views about child care (see, for example, Ailwood, 2008b; Brennan, 1998; Osgood, 2012; Penn, 2011b; Wong, 2006).

The analytical methods applied in this inquiry found that one major way in which the participants in the focus group discussions defined early childhood teacher professional identities was in how they saw child care. The preservice teachers’

images of child care provide a conceptual structure for this chapter. Regimes of truth about child care and work in child care were traced in the preservice teachers' talk. The professional identities of early childhood teachers were "spoken into existence" (Sondergaard, 2002, p. 191) through these discursive rules. In the second part of this chapter, attention is turned to discourses that were read as being critical in the constitution of identities in early childhood: qualifications and positions.

7.1 PRODUCING IMAGES OF CHILD CARE

In the focus group talk-as-text data, there was substantial discussion about the purpose of child care. The preservice teachers constructed understandings of child care through the discourses that were accessible to them. When the question was put to the focus groups, "What is child care for?" the overwhelming response was that child care was a place to support parents' participation in the paid workforce. Child care was spoken as:

... it helps parents who have to work. (Ruth, FG 3: 9)

... important because if parents want to go back to work then it's really important that they have somewhere for their kids to go. (Rory, FG 1: 45–47)

The importance of child care was denoted through the service that is provided for parents so that they can participate in the workforce. An origin of child care as place to support parents' capacity to engage in paid work was examined in Chapter 2. The link between child care and workforce participation, and "economic prosperity" was located in the analysis of *New Directions* (see Chapter 5). This link between the child care and workforce participation was located in the preservice teachers' talk. The focus in the main was on provision of a care service, rather than a vision for understandings of broader economic drivers.

The preservice teachers' talk focused on child care as care to assist parents. Mothers were frequently spoken as the primary carers for children:

... to help mothers who work ... (Kath, FG 2: 4–5)

Kath also recalled her own experience as a child in child care:

It was just so there was a place to go when mum went to work. (FG 2: 209–210).

Child care was a place “to go” further speaks its purpose as for mothers/parents. In Australia, the rates of parental workforce participation have changed at different historical points in time (ABS, 2011a). The notion that child care provides for a mother’s need and relinquishes her from care responsibilities was consistent in the preservice teachers’ talk. Child care as care was spoken as a regime of truth: mothers/parents had a need, and the purpose of child care was to meet this need.

Claire assumed the presence of two parents when discussing access to child care:

I believe child care is important for parents, just because at the moment you need to be out there—both parents working—to actually get by. (FG 3: 22–23)

Claire’s two parent family need child care and the reason is work-related. She legitimates child care use because of the state of the economy that necessitates “both parents” to work. Presumably if one parent did not work then child care would not be needed. The regime of truth that child care is for care is maintained. Moreover, if only one parent was working then presumably a child would be at home and not need child care.

In addition to the need for working parents to access child care, there was acknowledgement of other reasons for the service. Jill raised the ideas that some children may attend child care for reasons other than their parents’ work:

A lot of children go to child care whose parents aren’t working. (FG 4: 15–16)

In a departure from the discursive rule that child care use is for work-related reasons, Jill introduced the fact that some parents use child care for other reasons. Whilst the reason for accessing child care might differ, work or non-related reasons, the logic produces child care as a care service for parents.

The positioning of child care for parents and for the economy produces child care as a service and work in child care settings as service provision. The early childhood teacher in child care is part of this service. The work is to provide care for children. At different points in their talk, the participants resisted the image of child care as only care, and looked to other purposes. Figure 7.1 captures some of the ways

in which the preservice teachers spoke images of child care, and how these images produced early childhood teacher professional identities.

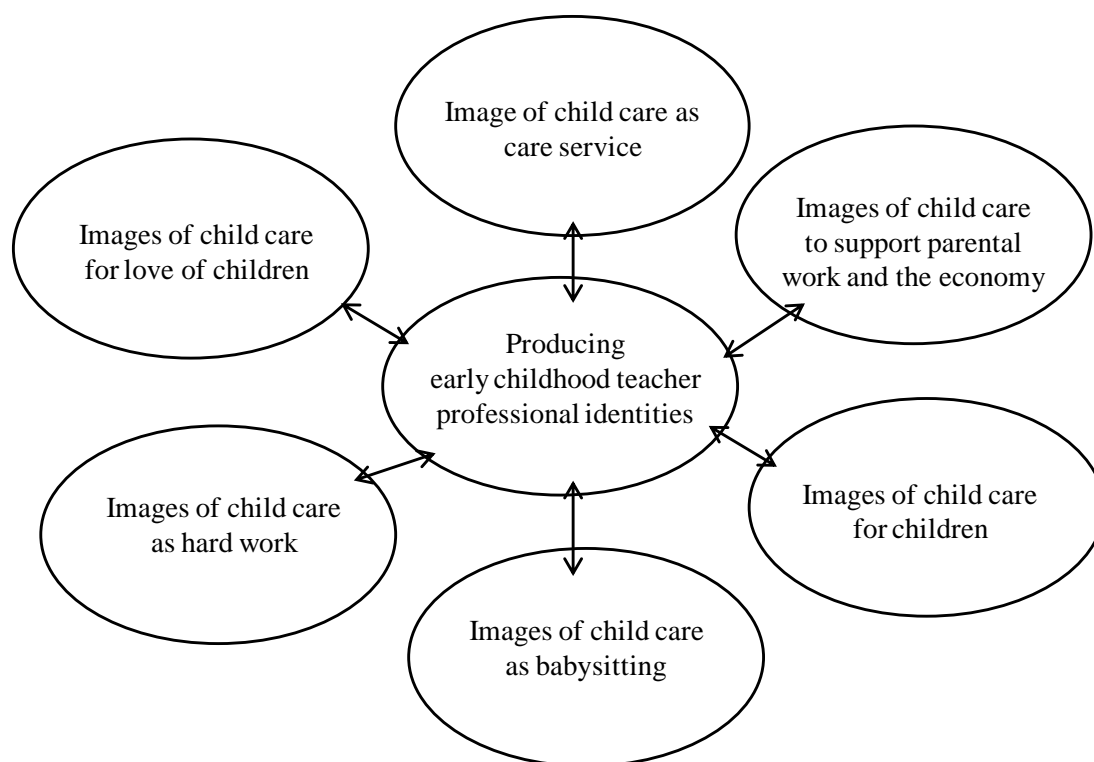


Figure 7.1. Producing early childhood teacher professional identities through images of child care.

In the following sections, each of these six images of child care is examined. Contrary to the visual representation depicted in Figure 7.1, the preservice teachers did not always speak these images as separate to one another, and the connections and intersections between them are mapped throughout the following discussion.

7.1.1 Child care “for parents who need a service”

This section is an account of the preservice teachers’ talk of child care as a care service. The intersections between the discourses that were located in the focus group discussions are examined, and the production of child care “for parents as a service” is described. Amy initially spoke a clear purpose for child care, then drew on discourses to locate other reasons for child care participation. A reading of Amy’s talk locates the tension, deviations and reversals in her talk of child care, and how it works to produce early childhood teacher professional identities.

In her preliminary remarks on what child care is for, Amy named it a service for parents:

... child care is basically just for parents who need a service for when they can't provide care for their children because of work commitments or if they don't have a family network that they can lean on. (FG 1: 54–57)

Child care as a service positions this early childhood context as a place where children are placed because parents are not able to care for them. Similar to Claire's logic, child care provides care for children, when either work necessitates it, or when there are no family to provide this care. The regime of truth is that child care use is legitimated by "work commitments". Moreover, child care is validated when there is no "family network" to provide care. Amy's talk of child care as a care service for parents who have no other option diminishes the work performed in child care. Through her talk, Amy established a category (Davies, 2004/2006) of "teacher as service provider/carer". The early childhood teacher professional identity is produced as a carer, whose role is to look after children.

As Amy continued, she drew on other discourses:

... I see child care for the younger years. The birth to maybe three or four, before they start actually being involved in curriculum as such. Like I know that in child care they *do* do learning but I don't see it as—like when they're in preschool that learning is more like it can be connected to what they do at school. (Amy, FG 1: 57–62, Amy's intonation)

Amy spoke a definition of child care that is defined according a child's age—"the birth to maybe three or four". In a return to the "certain age" of three that was examined in Chapter 6 (see Section 6.1.3), Amy drew on the age when child care becomes not simply care, but something else. A curriculum assigns validity to an early childhood program, and along with the age of the child, denotes something other than child care—"before they start actually being involved in a curriculum". The regime of truth or discursive rule that Amy speaks is that birth to three/four is child care and three/four onwards is about something other than child care, involving curriculum "when they're in preschool". The discourses that are accessible to her—child development and outcomes education, manifested in a curriculum—enable the distinction between child care and preschool. Earlier, in Chapter 5, the blurry distinction between care and education was examined (see Section 5.5). In Amy's talk, she works with the complexities between education/care.

There is status and power attached to a curriculum, and this enabled Amy to speak early childhood teacher professional identities as more important with older children, where a curriculum is used. Elsewhere, in the focus group discussion the work of a teacher is also assigned status and importance through:

programming and planning, like the teachers plan stuff. (Rory, FG 1: 94)

The curriculum, together with planning and programming apparently afford an early childhood teacher power and professional status. The link between preschool and school establishes a hierarchy of early childhood settings—with child care the least educative, preschool, and then school the highest level of importance. The early childhood teacher professional identity in preschool is thus assigned worthy and legitimate through learning/curriculum. The early childhood teacher who is connected to what they do at school is afforded greater status and validation. Such logic is commensurate with “early childhood educators working closest to the school gate are better trained and rewarded” (OECD, 2006, p. 158).

Since the focus group data was collected, and Amy drew on curriculum to define child care/preschool, a national curriculum for before-school contexts has been introduced in Australia. *Being, belonging and becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia* (EYLF) (DEEWR, 2009a) is a curriculum for use in all before-school contexts, including child care. In *New Directions* (Rudd & Macklin, 2007b), some two years prior to the EYLF document being released, it was foreshadowed that such a national early childhood curriculum “is not a school-like curriculum and will not result in early childhood centres becoming schools” (p. 12). Amy and Rory drew on curriculum to define child care/preschool, though also to distinguish levels of importance for early childhood teachers. The regime of truth spoken was that a curriculum validates the work of a teacher, because it was used in schools, and because important learning occurs.

In Amy’s talk she spoke child care as care, though at other times she named it as something more—but never as important as preschool or school. Amy moved from discourses of service and care, drawing on discourses of learning and child development to resist and describe child care as other than care. Then, in a reversal, Amy returns to the regime of truth that child care is a service to parents:

...but like I feel that child care is just that service to help relieve the pressures for the parents. (FG 1: 62–63)

In Amy's talk of child care, it is possible to identify tensions, reversals and deviations. First, child care was spoken as primarily a service to parents. Next, she drew on learning to create it as something other than just a service to parents. The learning in child care though was not as important as learning in preschool, at least partially because of the curriculum. Learning and curriculum denote early childhood teacher professional identities. In Amy's talk, she struggled with the purpose of child care, and drew on the discourses accessible to her to make sense of it. As Amy negotiated the tensions between the care/service and learning/education discourses, she moved back and forth between these as through her talk she produced different images of child care. Through her talk, she established a category of early childhood teacher in child care as a carer who provides a service for parents. Although she attempted to speak the early childhood teacher otherwise, the care discourse prevailed compelling her to return to early childhood teacher as carer. One reading of this excerpt might serve as an illustration of the struggle for a third year student between the knowledge she is acquiring through her course and the more established *folkloric* knowledge that Amy also acts on.

7.1.2 Child care “allows parents to go to work and support the economy”

Another version of child care as a care service was read in Margie's talk. Like Amy, she drew on this and other discourses to make sense of child care, and early childhood teacher professional identities. At one point Margie described the purpose for child care:

I think it serves a purpose in that it allows parents to go to work and support the economy which is what the government wants. But I think also that it serves a profound purpose for young children in their development in particular high quality care serves an amazing purpose in so many ways for young children and is a good start for young children. (FG 1: 71–76)

The assumption that child care is for parents and the economy is produced as a regime of truth by Margie. Here, the fit with *New Directions*, analysed in Chapter 5, is obvious. Here, Margie can produce child care as other than only care—the work of caring for children is actually making a contribution to the national economy. In Chapter 6 Margie turned to the discourse of quality to produce early childhood

teacher professional identities (see Section 6.1.5). Here, the discourse of quality works child care to serve a “profound purpose” (FG 1: 73). When child care as care/service is combined with quality, this enables the early childhood teachers’ professional identities to be produced as more than a care/service provider. Quality is assigned power (Foucault, 1982) works to legitimate child care, not only for children, but also for the identities of the early childhood teacher in child care.

In the preservice teachers’ talk, there were other examples of holding together discourses that shapes images of child care. Kath first described a purpose for child care as a care service, and then turned to other discourses:

... it’s purely to help mothers who work, single mothers, people that need that service. Whereas now I look at it more as not only that need as well, but the need for the children as well for developmental issues and things like that. (FG 2: 4–7)

Kath’s talk of helping a mother who is in need of service was reminiscent of other preservice teachers’ talk already examined in this chapter (see Section 7.1.1). Ruth, Rory, Amy and Margie each drew on care/service discourses to produce an image of child care as care. Kath turned to child development to produce an image of child care, where the early childhood teacher’s knowledge was legitimised.

By extending the notion of need to “developmental issues”, child care is produced as serving children as well. Early intervention is purported in the literature as paramount for children who have particular developmental needs (Belsky, Melhuish, Barnes, Leyland, & Romaniuk, 2006; Berk, 2009; Schweinhart et al., 2005). This enabled Kath to speak child care, and work in child care, as something more than a service. This orientation also aligns with a philanthropic discourse where children and families considered disadvantaged, through economic or social situations, will benefit from engagement in an early childhood program.

In her resistance to the image of a care service for parents, Leith spoke child care as:

... all about the children. (FG 3: 65)

Child care as a place for children aligns with child-centred early childhood philosophy that proposes children as central to work in early childhood (Fleet, Patterson, & Robertson, 2006; Rinaldi, 2006). In an attempt to disrupt the idea that

child care is a service, Leith turned the focus to children. In doing so, she spoke the work of the early childhood teacher to be for children, not for parents' work needs. The early childhood teacher professional identity is produced as a teacher, not as a service provider for families.

The images of child care that were located in the preservice teachers' talk, and have so far been examined, included child care as a care service; child care for work/economy; and child care for children. The dominant image of child care that was located in the focus groups discussions was child care as a care service, both in terms of the frequency and the authority with which it was spoken. In the preservice teachers' talk of child care on every occasion in the data the purpose of child care was always first as a care service, with the needs of parents spoken first. Some participants, like Leith above, went on to speak the needs of children. The only exception to this was Tegan, whose first response to the purpose of child care was for children's brain development (see Chapter 6, Section 6.1.1). The regimes of truth that are in play around what child care is, go some way to explain the preservice teachers' talk about work in child care.

7.1.3 Child care for “children to support our economy in the future”

Elsewhere, Amy and Melissa add to Margie's argument that child care will support the economy. At the same time there is frustration that even *with* the benefits for the economy child care is not valued:

Amy: Well the government won't put money into it [child care] because it won't get them re-elected because it's not seen as societally [sic] important.

Melissa: But if they start to advocate and say, 'This is the research. This is how these children will support our economy in the future. We know that this is going to help'. People might start to realise this is important. (FG 1: 665-668)

Whilst there is acknowledgement that child care is not valued and spoken as not worthy as an election platform, Melissa disrupts this logic by introducing other powerful discourses — research/scientific and economic discourses — that could rupture ways of thinking about child care, and children. Economics, and in particular “our economy in the future” are drawn on to shift the ways in which child care, and work in child care, is produced. The science of research and economics are assigned importance and status (Foucault, 1982) — a way to ignite interest and improve

funding in child care. This resonates with the “child as economic unit” discourse that was read in *New Directions* (see Chapter 5, Section 5.4). This is the only time across the four focus groups that a connection is made between government funding/profile of child care and the children spoken as supporting “our economy in the future”. The notable disconnect between the discourse dominant in *New Directions* which relies heavily on the power of the economic argument, and the almost total lack of evidence of this economic discourse in the preservice teachers’ talk, is an area worthy of further exploration.

7.1.4 Child care as “just babysitting”

This reading of the preservice teachers’ talk now turns to discussions about the nature of work in child care. Through this talk, they established various discursive rules and categories. Margie and Melissa worked through different views of child care, and work in child care:

There is a big view that you have to—you can just ask any of your family and someone will say it’s just babysitting and that goes a long way to people’s views of it and people going in thinking that’s all they have to do. (Margie, FG 1: 163–166)

In her talk of a dominant or “big view” she turned to the care discourse captured elsewhere in the preservice teachers’ talk on the purpose of child care, and examined earlier in this chapter. Child care as a service for working parents intersects with the discourse of babysitting to produce work in child care “just babysitting”, work that anyone is able to do. This construction diminishes the nature of the work, and the low value that is assigned. There are no special requirements to be a babysitter—the 16-year-old neighbour can do this, while she is doing her homework for high school and for pocket money. Melissa also drew on care as babysitting and linked this with a mothers’ care of children:

I mean mothers don’t want to stay home with their kids because they think they’re just babysitting for their own kids and not getting paid for it. They don’t view it as spending time with their child and teaching their child and educating them and doing things... (FG 1: 167–172)

In Melissa’s talk care/babysitting is located as dominant for the way it constructs care of children. The regime of truth is that care of children is babysitting.

Thus, it is sayable that care of children is babysitting, whether performed by people working in child care settings or by mothers at home. The power (Foucault, 1982) that is assigned through money works to legitimate care of children. Care of children is spoken as so undervalued that it becomes sayable that the reason that mothers do not want to look after even their own children is that it is “just babysitting” and unpaid work. In this vein, in Germany a proposed government policy will pay parents to stay at home and “not put their children into crèches”. A monthly payment will be made to parents in recognition that they were at home caring for a child (The Economist, 2012).

Melissa’s description of a mother’s work being babysitting is a departure from the more romantic associations with attachment theory (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Belsky, 1990) and maternalism (Ailwood, 2008b; Ailwood & Boyd, 2006; Osgood, 2012), that construct motherhood differently, and provide a reason for children to be at home with their mother. Moreover, talk of a mother caring for her child being a “job” is in tension with the more common depiction of motherhood as rewarding and life’s work (Biddulph, 2006; Manne, 2005).

Melissa’s talk of babysitting of children produces early childhood teacher professional identities as carers, whose work is not valued. However, other accessible discourses allow her to differentiate early childhood teachers’ work as the most important— more important than the role of a mother. Melissa distinguished an early childhood teacher from a mother, who does not spend time with a child “educating them and doing things”. The category of early childhood teacher as “teacher who educates children” is suggested here. Once again, the early childhood teacher in child care is spoken as more than a carer, because “teaching” and “doing things” calls for a teacher. Thus, early childhood teacher professional identities are produced as teachers, through resistance to babysitting and care/service discourses.

As the participants struggled to settle between discourses of care/babysitting and teaching/learning/educating, they attempted to establish a category in which the early childhood teacher in child care is more than a babysitter. The dominant discourse however remained as the assumption that child care exists primarily as a service for parents. The needs of children, whilst important, are secondary.

The “glorified babysitter”

At one point, after discussion about the university course, Maeve referred to a term used to describe an early childhood teacher who works in child care:

... glorified babysitter. I get that all the time. (FG 2:135)

As a preservice teacher who is studying a university degree to be a degree-qualified early childhood teacher, her talk indicated a struggle to hold together care/babysitting and something more than this. In professions the degree qualification is assigned power (Foucault, 1984b) and should, according to discursive rules, distinguish Maeve from others who work in child care and do not have a degree. Later, as a way of explaining to her family the importance of working in child care, Maeve described in some detail her understanding of work in child care, including “parent-teacher interviews for the two year old group” (FG 2: 203-204). This explanation did not seem enough to shift the prevailing discourse of child care as babysitting. Maeve went on and referred to the description of work in child care:

... which is probably why when I tell my parents’ friends that I work in child care ... I get the glorified babysitter statement a lot. (FG 2: 206–207)

A degree qualification denotes expert knowledge and should produce an early childhood teacher as a professional (Sachs, 1999; Yinger, 2005). The knowledge that comes with a degree assigns power and status, and could work to glorify work in child care. Maeve’s talk of parent–teacher interviews was an attempt to demonstrate her knowledge and establish a category of a “teacher as more than babysitter”. Yet, she appears to be resigned to the category of “glorified babysitter” as a way to hold together the dominant care discourses, and the importance of her qualification/knowledge. The early childhood teacher in child care is spoken as a babysitter, like others who work in child care, though with a qualifier of an “important babysitter”. This importance, the glorification, comes from holding a university degree.

“I don’t think it’s babysitting anymore”

Elsewhere in the focus group data, there were other attempts to produce work in child care as more than babysitting. After initially speaking child care as babysitting the talk turns to other discourses that the participants had become aware of since commencing their early childhood course:

... now I look at it more as not only that need (child care) as well, but the need for the children as well for developmental issues and things like that. (Kath, FG 2: 5–7)

I guess I don't think it's like a babysitting thing anymore. I know that they actually do learn—the play based learning. (Margie, FG 1: 204–206)

This shift in their thinking was attributed to the knowledge acquired in the early childhood course—about development, learning and play. The elevation of care/babysitting is enabled through the “scientificity” (Lather, 2006) of learning. However, this was not structured learning, and Margie qualifies “play based learning”. Play as a discourse is ingrained mantra-like in early childhood (Grieshaber & McArdle, 2010), and was examined in Chapter 6 (see Section 6.1.4).

Margie, and her preservice teacher peers, are not alone in resistance to the care/babysitting discourse that shapes images of child care. The resistance to child care as “babysitting” is also located in government talk. At the launch of Goodstart Early Learning, Kate Ellis, Minister for Early Education and Child care/Minister for Workforce Participation argued: “Child care centres should not be viewed as babysitting. What they are is actually the critical education and care for those early years that know are so important to a child's overall development” (ABC News Online, 2011).

Once again, the neuroscience and child development discourses make it necessary to speak child care as other than care/babysitting. Child care becomes a place where the important early years call for teaching and learning. Early childhood teachers in child care are thus produced as teachers, not babysitters, who are called on to promote important learning.

7.1.5 Child care as “hard work”

A tension between care/babysitting and learning/teacher becomes apparent when the preservice teachers spoke work the nature of work in child care. When asked about people who work in child care the preservice teachers first overwhelmingly turned to the “hard work” (Lisa, FG 1: 690). The word *hard* was spoken 26 times in the focus group discussions to describe work in child care. One participant, Margie, returned repeatedly to the hard work of child care to establish a category of the early childhood teachers in child care as “hard workers” (Margie, FG

1: 601), who “work so hard” (Margie, FG 1: 602) and “what we do is hard” (Margie, FG 1: 628–629). Work in child care has been acknowledged in the literature as challenging and undervalued (Osgood, 2012; Sumsion, 2003; Watson, 2006b; Whitebook & Sakai, 2003). In the preservice teachers’ talk, there was both admiration for work in child care—because it is so hard; and resistance—because it is so hard they would not want to do it.

Hand in hand with the image of work in child care being difficult goes the idea that work was undervalued:

... not being appreciated when you’ve done all this hard work. (Maeve, FG 2: 518–519)

Margie realised that the “hard work” discourse is not sufficient to guarantee being valued as a teacher:

I think they recognise you’re a hard worker and dedicated but you’re not really an educator. (Margie, FG 1:602–604)

The intensity and need for commitment to work in child care produces professional identities as admirable, but remaining not as important as a teacher, an educator. Hard work in child care is actually spoken as diminishing the work of the educator. The regime of truth spoken was that because it is hard work, it is not seen as professional. The category of “early childhood teacher in child care as hard worker” is well established within the focus group participants. Amy went even further, describing people who work in child care as hard workers and dedicated workers:

Some of the hardest workers there are. And dedicated—absolutely dedicated workers. (FG 1: 252–253)

Although this is hard work and it is negative, at the same time, the preservice teachers turn this into a positive, positioning this as work as important and not something just anyone could do:

... I don’t think many people would be able to ... (Peta, FG 2: 217–218)

It takes a special kind of person. (Kath, FG 2: 219)

The preservice teachers struggled as they attempted to maintain and belong to the category (Davies, 2004/2006) of hard working/dedicated early childhood teachers

in child care. Yet, at the same time, through their talk, there was resistance to this category:

I couldn't imagine doing it every single day. (Peta, FG 2: 238–239)

One way through which Margie made sense of “hard work” in child care was to propose advocacy. However, she resisted this too as it would contribute to the hard work and “advocacy is another job” (FG 1: 638). Advocacy and activism are proposed as one way through which early childhood teachers are empowered to bring about change (Sumsion, 2006). However, for Margie this would add to the “hard work”.

7.1.6 “Shabby” working conditions in child care

In the preservice teachers' talk, the nature of the hard work in child care was spoken alongside other negatives: “... the conditions aren't that great” (FG 2: 224–226). When Melissa and Maeve were asked what people who work in child care are like, they returned to the hard work and referred to the conditions:

... People working in child care centres have to be dedicated because the working conditions are fairly shabby. (Melissa, FG 1: 256–257)

You have to really love what you're doing to put up with the conditions. (FG 2: 231–232)

The regime of truth spoken was that to work in child care you have to love children, and be a hard worker, to put up with the hard work and poor conditions.

Maeve added further reasons not to work in child care:

... So much paperwork ... there's so many things that you need to do in that time, not just cleaning but also all the work ... (FG 2: 246–250)

In the literature, the regulatory requirements in child care have been attributed to staff job satisfaction (Fenech, 2006) and staff turnover (Whitebook & Sakai, 2003). Participants had any number of reasons for choosing not work in child care. Alongside the volume of work was “the hours” of work (Lisa, FG 1: 554). Money was also drawn on as a factor in choosing to work, or not to work in child care: “... the pay, it's not like an incentive ...” (Rory, FG 1: 551–552). Salary was echoed elsewhere in the focus groups: “the pay” (Royanna, FG 1: 692); “... the pay. There isn't enough” (Lisa, FG 1: 693). Pay parity across early childhood contexts has been

identified as one reason that early childhood teachers may choose not to work in child care in Australia (Watson, 2006b). An early childhood teacher in child care is paid significantly less than a salary of a primary school teacher (Independent Education Union ACT/NSW, 2012; Queensland Industrial Relations Commission, 2000; Watson, 2006b). For Margie, in particular, if the money/salary in child care was the same as she may earn as in primary school she would definitely work in child care:

If the pay was there I'd do it and I've always said that. If the pay was there I'd be happy to work in child care. (FG 1: 558–559)

Salary and remuneration is one way through which power is assigned (de Botton, 2005). Money affords status. Despite the pay disparity between different early childhood contexts, pay/money in relation to salary was spoken 19 times across the focus groups. It was spoken together with other work conditions to describe work in child care. In the analysis of *New Directions* the child was produced as a commodity and an economic unit (see Chapter 5, Section 5.4). The corporatisation (Hatcher, 2008) of child care, and work in child care is permeated through economics, and in child care the teachers' poor pay and conditions, and high fees for parents.

7.1.7 “Love for children”

Given the list of reasons not to work in child care, the participants needed to find explanations for why the dedicated and hardworking teachers continue to work there. The discourse powerful enough to override economics was love.

In the preservice teachers' talk of child care, there was insistence that despite the conditions, this did not negate a “love for children” (Ruth, FG 2, 223). The preservice teachers' talk of love included love of children, which overrode the nature of the hard work in child care. The regime of truth was that it was hard work, with shabby conditions, and this was why they were choosing not to work in child care. However, emphasis on money and a possible aversion to hard work does not sit comfortably with a professional identity.

Melissa returned to the category of the early childhood teacher in child care as a hard worker, and added to her image of work in child care:

But coming back to parents saying that you're a hard worker, something that really gets to me is parents or people in general often think of it being hard work. Not in terms of it being honest hard work kind of hard to do, but in the fact that it's a horrible job putting up with children all day long. And you just think "Can't you just see the beauty in the children and understand". (FG 1: 617–622)

Melissa's talk is referring to the lack of understanding around work in early childhood, which was examined in Chapter 6 (see Section 6.2). In addition to parents not understanding early childhood, "people in general" do not understand it. In her insistence that working with children is enjoyable, Melissa drew on particular images of children as beautiful, suggesting Rousseau's natural, sweet and innocent child (Rousseau, 1991). This image makes sayable that work in child care, although hard, is pleasurable and worth it.

At different points in the focus group discussions, there was talk of reluctance to work in child care because of the work conditions, though this was often qualified by reiterating that this is not because of the children:

Just the conditions. Birth to three years, my favourite age group, but I don't particularly want to work in a child care centre if I can avoid it because of the working conditions. (Melissa, FG 1: 555–557)

Kath had worked in child care previously, though reflects on the conditions as a key reason for not returning to work in child care:

The girls asked me before if I would ever go back to child care and quite quickly I said no and that's probably because of the conditions. I would probably love to go back to the younger age group but I don't think the conditions—I don't think I could handle that now. I don't think I would have the stamina and the patience to put up with—the children would be fine but the actual work... (FG 2: 240–245)

Kath spoke work in child care as not desirable, because of the "conditions". Through her talk, there were reversals as she negotiated the negativity of work in child care and her "love" of the younger age group. Then, she again speaks the conditions, this time requiring "stamina" and "patience", though she qualifies that the work with "the children would be fine". It would be not be discursively permissible for Kath to speak her choice not to work in child care because of the children, so she needs to

correct this. Melissa and Kath's insist that the children are "fine" and they are not the issue.

Working conditions are also drawn on by Lisa, when she is asked if she would become involved in child care:

I think the number one factor why I probably wouldn't is because I'm mostly afraid that because of the bad conditions and everything it would take away from my love for the age group. (FG 1: 699–700)

The "games of truth" (Foucault, 1990b, p. 9) necessitate that the preservice teachers hold together images of child care/babysitting/hard work with images of children who are beautiful and loveable. It would not be discursively permissible to be an early childhood teacher and not like children. An early childhood teacher in child care is produced as professional who likes children. However, the work in child care is not necessarily liked. It is the context of child care that is spoken as problematic, with an insistence that it is not the children.

As the preservice teachers frequently nominated work conditions as reasons not to work in child care, they were almost equally insistent that they loved younger children. Alongside hard work, and shabby working conditions, and poorly paid work in child care it was necessary to love children. Beth was "a nanny still today and I love those children" (FG 3, lines 106-107). Elsewhere, Tegan also noted love as important for work in child care:

A general love of kids. Like you have to have a love for kids. (FG 4: 821–822)

A reading of the preservice teachers' talk identified this important of a "teacher who loves children". However, this was a difficult category to maintain and caused tensions. If love was all that required it actually diminished the teaching qualification.

Love is spoken in the literature as a quality that is important for people who work in child care, and for early childhood teachers (Page, 2009). At the same time love, as a soft quality, is often associated with feminised workforces (Hatcher, 2009), such as early childhood. The focus group participants' talk of what is important to work with young children is consistent with the recent study conducted in the US by the Child Care Exchange, where "nurturing personality" (59%) and "love of

children” (51%) were the two most frequent responses. The study cited “BA degree in early childhood education” (42%) as the third most frequent response (Neugebauer, 2011, p. 23).

In an attempt to capture two seemingly competing discourses Page (2009) introduces the term “professional love”, and in doing so distinguishes mother-love from love provided in a care situation. Page’s research concludes that mothers put a strong focus on love as a desired trait of a carer who looks after children. The category of early childhood teacher as “loving professional” insists that love is important, and resists the notion that love diminishes the value placed on care work.

Initially Ruth resisted the idea that love is the main requirement for working with young children, and then she drew on other discourses at play:

A love for children is not the only thing you need to be a good child care worker—you need to have a knowledge base behind you. You have to have a love for children but that’s not—you can’t just go yeah, I’ve got a love for children but I can’t read or I can’t write or I can’t speak properly—you know there’s a lot to the foundation you need to build on. (FG 3: 223–228)

A love for children as the sole requirement to work in child care for her diminishes the importance of this work. Similar to the construction of child care as care and babysitting, if love is all that is required then anyone can do it. This regime of truth does not require a teaching qualification and renders Ruth’s degree not necessary. Her insistence that a “knowledge base” was important alongside love, enabled her to re-establish a category of “early childhood teacher with knowledge”, who knows the importance of “the foundation you need to build on”. Ruth recovers the identity of an early childhood teacher in child care to be more than a loving carer. The regime of truth that is spoken is that, in order to be an early childhood teacher in child care knowledge is needed, so that children’s needs are met.

Around the time of data collection a television campaign ran in Australia for ABC Learning (ABC Learning Centres Limited, 2006), at the time the largest provider of child care in the world. The advertisement included the Beatles song “All you need is love” and included the message that in these child care centres the staff loved and cared for the children. Later, in the focus group discussion, Ruth returned to the importance of love, and this time argued that another emotion is needed to work in child care:

You've got to love kids. You've got to have a passion for it I think—not necessarily a love and enjoy it—you've got to really have a passion. (FG 3: 392–394)

Ruth elevated the emotional requirement to work in child care—it needs more than just love—passion is needed. Nicola also challenged that love is the most important quality for work in child care:

I think you have to have an interest in children, not just love kids with a cutesy factor but an interest in children and how they become what they are, I guess. (FG 4: 848–850)

Nicola acknowledged that whilst love is important, she qualified what she meant by love. It seems she was wary of a cute interpretation of love, and instead, connects love with “an interest in children”. It seems that child development provides the knowledge needed for early childhood teachers to know “how they become what they are”.

With the problems for working in child care established—hard work, shabby conditions, not enough to love children—the preservice teachers established another category of early childhood teacher—one who is able to choose not to work in child care. Through their degree qualification, the preservice teachers will have potential career choices. Their degree affords them options to work in early childhood contexts other than child care. As degree-qualified early childhood teachers, they will have different career options available, including a number of early childhood contexts—kindergarten/preschool and primary school (Watson, 2006b). The following section examines the preservice teachers' talk as they spoke their career options outside of child care.

7.1.8 “Getting out of the child care area”

As the preservice teachers struggled with tensions around the purpose of child care and the nature of work in child care, they turned to other career options that were available to them. In doing so, they set about constructing alternate career pathways that did not include child care. Teaching in a primary school was one way through the tension of work in child care that did not legitimate the early childhood teacher professional identities as worthy and important. As Melissa said:

... people who are trained, like especially with degrees, don't want to go back into the child care industry because they get enough respect or recognition ... Often you move into other fields because you don't want to tell people "I work at a child care" and they just look at you and you're like "I've got a four-year degree". So often people would move into preschool or lower primary. (FG 1: 181–190)

Work in child care, it seems, is not valued. The teaching degree is considered not necessary to work in child care, thus produces this career option as not sayable.

Kathy also resisted the logic that a degree qualification was needed to work in child care:

... but I think that you don't need to do this course to be a child care worker. You could just go to TAFE and do a diploma in half the time. (FG 1: 511–513)

It seems that work in child care excludes a university-qualified person:

I think most of us are here because we want to be early childhood teachers. (Kathy, FG 2: 513–514)

Kath's distinction between child care workers and early childhood teachers resonates with workforce divisions in the field (Moss, 2010; Osgood, 2012; Watson, 2006b).

Maeve spoke of her teaching qualification, as reason not work to work in child care. In her resistance to child care as a career pathway:

It's not worth it. You're not going to get any better—just because you're more skilled, you're not going to get any better rate pay; the conditions aren't going to improve. You'll have to work harder because you'll feel you're not giving 100 per cent if you don't and you still get the same reaction from parents and it's not worth it. (FG 2: 478–483)

There is investment (McNay, 1992) in completing a degree. Work in child care does not fit with the discursive rule that a degree affords professional worth and validation. This worth comes, in part, from the rate of pay, though is also diminished by yet again—the conditions.

Engagement and subsequent completion of a university degree qualification equips positions early childhood teachers with particular skills and knowledge. Teacher education seeks to position graduates as being knowledgeable, though at the

same time on a continuum of ongoing professional learning that spans across their careers (Hatch, 1999; Millwater, 2009). Debate about the qualifications necessary to work in child care have been constructed through the work being “natural mothering instinct” (Ailwood, 2008b, p. 162) that women, as the majority of the workforce, are well positioned to engage in, with little training. At the same time, there is a tenet that qualifications are not only desirable, but also necessary, in order to offer a quality early childhood program (OECD, 2006; Sylva et al., 2004).

The preservice teachers were adamant about their career pathways, and these were not in child care:

Maeve: I definitely want to work in the classroom with the children. (FG 2: 541–542)

Ruth: I guess we’re all getting out of the child care area and going into the primary.

Moderator: So you’re going more into primary?

Ruth: Everyone’s going to the Prep to Grade Three area.

(FG 3: 498–516)

The participants’ talk of a teaching qualification affording a career pathway in primary school reflects the notion of a degree as a “pathway *out of* childcare” (Watson, 2006b, p. xv, original emphasis). The degree assigned professional empowerment—where early childhood teachers have career options available.

7.1.9 “An important job for children”

The degree afforded empowerment in other ways. For Claire, the degree provided her with expertise and knowledge, and was more important than her experience in child care:

Even before I started I was working in a child care centre. I knew I was doing an important job for the children and I was laying foundations, but it wasn’t until I started my degree that I thought gosh I really am laying the foundation for these children. (FG 3: 124–127)

Claire sought to establish the importance of her university course in providing her with *insider knowledge* about the early years. She had some awareness of the importance of the early years, and the “foundations” that her “important job” was

providing. It appears that her course provided her with an awakening about what “an important job for the children” she was engaged in. By Claire producing the early years as important, she appears to draw on the discourses of the science of child development and neuroscience/brain research. The importance assigned to the early years enables her to speak professional identities of early childhood teachers as important. This talk locates identities of early childhood teachers within the knowledge/power (Foucault, 1980a, 1980b) nexus, where it is possible to speak them as important and elevate them to a level through the “foundation for these children”. It seems that commencing her university course reinforced this, and appears to have provided an epiphany-like experience where she realised that she “really” was “laying the foundations”. This important foundational work further produces the identities of preservice teachers as important work that should, be valued according to the regime of truth that Claire creates.

Like Claire, Margie attributes her university course to providing her a different way of viewing early childhood:

I went to TAFE, worked for two years and then came to uni and I reflect back on my work now and think if I knew what I know now I would do things so differently and it's just understanding and this two years has given me so much more to be a better teacher. (FG1: 446–449)

Margie had experienced TAFE education, and worked in child care for two years; however, it appears that her university course was what has provided with knowledge. The knowledge that she has developed, seemingly attributed solely to her course, has brought about changes in her thinking where she “would do things do differently”. As was the case with Claire, Margie’s course appears to have brought about an epiphany in her understanding of the early years. In “this two years” she has developed much knowledge through which her professional identity is constituted as a much “better teacher”. For Margie, her qualification symbolises the knowledge/power that enables identities in early childhood to be validated as important.

Margie’s talk of a “better teacher” suggests that she was a “teacher” when she was at TAFE and when she worked in child care. This logic defies other talk or absolute truth that a teacher is a person who holds a degree qualification.

7.2 CHILD CARE QUALIFICATIONS AND POSITIONS

Early childhood is a diverse field with complex qualification requirements (Adams, 2008; McGillivray, 2010). In Australia child care has required different qualification requirements to other early childhood contexts (Rush, 2006; Watson, 2006b). In child care, a particular position has required a one, two or three year early childhood qualification. For example, a Director in child care has been required to hold a three year diploma/degree qualification (see discussion in Chapter 2, Section 2.1.3). The calls for universal access provision (DEEWR, 2009), foreshadowed in *New Directions* (Rudd & Macklin, 2007b) require a “four-year qualified teacher” (p. 16) to provide preschool in early childhood contexts, including child care.

The preservice teachers in the focus groups referred to qualifications and positions at different points in their discussion. The following excerpt is one illustration of the importance the preservice teachers placed in qualifications and position titles as they produced early childhood teacher professional identities:

Rian: ... my [relative] has been in child care for 15 years and has just got her diploma. Just got her diploma in 15 years in child care, and she’s just finished her diploma. And throughout those 15 years she’s been a director, she’s mainly a group leader ... she was a director without a diploma ... It was just basically too hard. To study.

Tegan: Well she took 15 years to do it, didn’t she?

(FG 4: 75–90)

Notions of power (Foucault, 1984b) and status are located in Rian and Tegan’s conversation. In the section that follows, this excerpt is examined as an example of preservice teachers’ efforts at category maintenance—at clarifying where early childhood teachers fit in the qualification/position ranking in child care.

7.2.1 A child care Director without a qualification

In child care key leadership and management responsibilities are assigned to the position of Director (Neugebauer, 1990; Rodd, 2006). As a discursive rule, the Director has the most senior position in child care, and therefore, her role *should* require the highest qualification. Yet, Rian’s relative was able to work as a Director and a Group Leader for 15 years without a qualification. In almost any profession, 15 years of service would carry weight and give a sense of status. In the early childhood

field staff turnover is high (Whitebook & Sakai, 2003) and 15 years in child care is very uncommon. Rian does not afford her relative status and belittles her for having only “just finished her diploma” after 15 years. For Rian and Tegan, the concept of working in the position of Director with no formal qualification breaks the discursive rules. Further, it diminishes the value placed on work in child care.

Rian and Tegan produce early childhood teacher professional identities, at least partially, through a degree-qualification. Power (Foucault, 1984b) resides in the preservice teachers’ degree-qualification, and this produces the early childhood teacher as more important than a person with a diploma qualification, or with no qualification. Rian and Tegan’s frustration with this situation was not isolated. Elsewhere, Margie lamented the lack of requirement for qualifications in child care:

mandatory qualifications have only come in the last few years ... before that you could work in child care with no qualification. (FG 1: 115–117)

In other early childhood contexts, including kindergarten/preschool and primary school, a degree would be the minimum qualification required—with this qualification requirement mandatory (QCT, 2006).

As degree-qualified early childhood teachers, Rian and Tegan want to hold status that positions them, their future roles and their future work, as important. This, however, is not a neat struggle for Rian and Tegan to resolve, and they need to work hard to maintain the category (Davies, 2004/2006) of “qualification-denotes-position-denotes-professionalism”.

In Rian and Tegan’s talk of the relative without the diploma, a number of points trouble the discursive rules for working in child care. The relative was unable to complete the qualification earlier, and the logic is that she was not capable because “she took 15 years to do it”. A provision in the regulations has enabled staff to work in a position without the prescribed qualification, with the proviso that the person be working towards the qualification (Watson, 2006b). However, in many cases, working towards has been loosely interpreted. The preservice service teachers made a distinction between being qualified and studying towards a qualification. At one point, Nicola discounted the process of studying for a required qualification:

... all you’ve got to be is signed up at TAFE. (FG 4: 36–38)

Lisa also expressed her frustration that people could work in a position without the required qualification:

You just have to be enrolled. So you still could have absolutely no idea what to do but if you're enrolled in the course you're seen as—like it's ridiculous.
(FG 1: 121–123)

Ruth was emphatic about having the appropriate qualification before being appointed to a position:

You *have* to go to TAFE before you can be a group leader—you have to do it. (FG 3: 169–170, emphasis added to indicate Ruth's intonation)

For Rian, it is important to have a qualification, but she also resists an absolute truth and plays with another possibility: it may actually *not* be necessary to hold a qualification to work in child care.

7.2.2 The qualification hierarchy

In the focus group data, preservice teachers Rian and Tegan spoke a *ranking* that exists within the qualifications— the degree is more important than a diploma. This logic resonates with a “two-tier system of ECEC” (Osgood, 2012), generated at least partially through qualification requirements. In the UK these requirements see teachers gravitate to nursery and receptions classes, and the larger proportion of the early childhood profession, child care workers, who generally have lower qualifications, work across a wider range of early childhood programs for children birth to five years (Moss, 2006). Such a system has the capacity to construct categories of early childhood teachers, based on qualifications. The power (Foucault, 1984b) that resides with a degree allows the professional identity of a degree-qualified early childhood teacher to be more important than that of a child care worker without it.

Meg established a similar early childhood qualification hierarchy:

You get so much more knowledge [at university] than if you just go to TAFE and sort of leave my options open. I can do whatever I want with children from there. (FG 2: 591–593)

Meg's focus on “more knowledge” positioned the early childhood teaching degree as more important, and more valuable than a TAFE qualification. With a degree, Meg has career “options” that include child care, kindergarten and primary school.

Claire also discussed qualifications, but disrupted the regime of truth that degree-qualified people are produced as the most important:

A lot of people are doing TAFE courses or are doing traineeships within the centre and I think because they haven't got the degree they're not seen on the same level as a teacher but they are. (FG 3: 121–124)

She both resists and redefines the category of “teacher-with-degree” to include other qualifications. By positioning TAFE diploma or certificate people as “on the same level” as a teacher, she introduces another rupture to the rule that early childhood degree-qualified teacher hold the qualification and therefore they are best positioned to provide for the early years.

7.2.3 Professional/not professional

Elsewhere, Melissa attempts to make sense of the absolute truth that qualification brings professional recognition, and this brings power:

If they needed more qualifications to work they would be respected more because it would be understood that they had the qualifications of a professional. They're not seen as a professional because they don't need to be a professional to—they're not. (FG 1: 545–549)

In order to make sense of qualifications, and professionalism, Melissa set about creating a category of “qualification-produces-professional”. Her logic was that the “more qualifications” that are held the more respect comes. The regime of truth spoken is that qualification produces professional. Yet, this is a very slippery category as the discursive rules are often broken—and it is possible to work in child care without a qualification.

Through their talk, the participants work to define the professional identities of early childhood teachers. The conclusions that they reach are largely dependent on the information/knowledge available to them. They continually turn to discourses of qualifications and knowledge to distinguish the early childhood teacher from the child care worker.

7.2.4 “A distinct difference between child care workers and teachers”

Although qualifications represent status, it appears that it is not as simple as that—there are other discourses at play that also maintain a category of “early-

childhood-teacher-separate-to-child-care-worker”. The preservice teachers established separate categories for work in child care and teachers and use qualifications to define this:

Rory: I find there’s a distinct difference between child care workers and teachers. Like this degree allows us to do both—you know we’re exposed to both. But it’s like if you have a degree you should be a teacher. That’s the instinct, the impression I get and if you want to be a child care worker why bother going to uni. You could just go do a diploma.

Lisa: Exactly.

Margie: Even my partner says to me “Why would you want to go into child care? You’re going to have a teaching degree. Why would you do that?”

(FG 1: 511–520)

The university degree qualification affords power/status, through knowledge, though also provides career options other than child care. The “distinct difference” is denoted by the titles and describes work in child care and in schools. Rory worked hard to establish and maintain the early childhood professional identity as separate to the child care worker. The degree produces a professional. Moreover, the degree is not necessary to work in child care, particularly through the image that the preservice spoke of child care as a care service. Although the universal access strategy calls for four year degree-qualified teacher, the preservice teachers spoke their degree as a way out of child care. This resonates with a finding in a report into the early childhood workforce that found that TAFE- diploma qualified staff who upgraded and completed a degree qualification viewed this yet again as a “pathway *out of* child care” (Watson, 2006b, p. xv, original emphasis).

7.2.5 “Why would you do it?”

As the preservice teachers continued to make sense of the difference between child care worker and early childhood teacher, they further established a of early childhood teacher with qualifications equals professional:

Rory: Even when people say to me “So what does this degree get you?” I’ll say “I can be a teacher. I can do this. Or I can be a director or child care worker” and the first thing they always say is “Why? Why would you do it?”

Not if you've got a degree, you don't even need to" and that is everybody's impression of child care.

Margie: And the status of teachers as opposed to the status of a child care worker.

Rory: Exactly. If you're a teacher, you're a professional. If you're a child care worker, you're a babysitter.

Melissa: Even teachers especially—well teachers in general aren't respected as much as they should be in society.

Rory: But still more than a child care worker.

(FG 1: 521–529)

In this extract from the preservice teachers' talk, there are attempts to distinguish between teacher/professional and child care worker/babysitter. The degree qualification is once again assigned power/status. To work in child care with a degree breaks the discursive rules. Child care is a service that was spoken as babysitting. Under these discursive conditions, a degree is not necessary. The investment (McNay, 1992) made to obtain a degree is not consistent with the limited value placed on work in child care.

Rory established a binary, making a distinction between professional and non-professional/babysitter. Yet, it is not as straightforward as this, and other discourses are at play to devalue the work of the teacher.

The hierarchy that is established speaks degrees of importance for an early childhood teacher—assigned through the context of work. Once again, in the preservice teachers' talk status and worth is assigned according to the place of work. A person's status provides their position in society, which is produced through discourses, and this status affords "resources, freedom, space, comfort, time and importantly being cared for" (de Botton, 2005, p. 3).

Under the discursive rules that speak child care into existence (Sondergaard, 2002) a child care worker with a four-year university degree is not permissible. It is unthinkable to Rory, and "people" and "that's everyone's impression". Rory located the early childhood teacher within the discourse of professionalism—with the technical attributes, skills, expertise (Beaty, 2004; Dalli, 2010) and status (de Botton,

2005) that constitute a professional. Yet, person who works in child care, including the highest position of Director, is spoken as a babysitter.

Early childhood is a complex field made up of a range of contexts, including child care, and the preservice teachers are part of this field. The early childhood teacher in child care is problematic as it breaks the discursive rules. The collisions and tensions between child care worker and teacher are not easy to navigate.

7.2.6 Producing the specialist early childhood teacher

One way through which the preservice teachers attempted to make sense of the early childhood teacher in child care, and the ways in which value is assigned to work in child care, was to look at other early childhood contexts. Primary school was turned to as a way through which early childhood teacher professional identities could be assigned power and status:

Peta: ... in this course, we do the primary school setting, we do early child care and preschool, kindy, so you are able to actually work in all.

[...]

Maeve: I think that's why I chose it because of the diversity of it. Say if I just did primary, then that would be that's what I was going to do and yeah there are different things you can do in that primary range, but at the end of the day you'll still be just in a primary school.

(FG 2: 612–625)

Peta located the early childhood professional identity as having career options, a point made several times in this chapter through examination of the preservice teachers' talk. As an early childhood teacher for children birth to eight years Peta will be able to "actually work in all" contexts. The degree-qualified early childhood teacher has choices, and this includes resisting child care as a career pathway.

Elsewhere the career pathway for the preservice teachers is spoken as a regime of truth:

... we're all getting out of the child care area and going into primary. (Ruth, FG 3: 498–499).

The pathway out of child care and into primary yet again resonates with Watson's (2006) report. The early childhood teacher in primary school is produced in a

category of “specialist teacher”, with knowledge and expertise that constitute a professional (Sachs, 2001; Yinger, 2005).

Through their talk of primary school teaching, the preservice teachers are able to speak the early childhood teacher professional identities as specialists. In her talk Peta maintained the category of “specialist early childhood teacher in primary school”. With early childhood knowledge she is comfortable to work in the lower years of primary school, whereas her primary school preservice peers have expressed fear:

I’ve had lots of friends in the primary course. People just make comments to say “I’d be petrified having a Year 1 class because they just kind of brush over teaching kids how to read and write”. And they’re like “I don’t know how I’d do this and have strategies for this”. I mean, there’s so much that they’re learning in those first couple of years [of school]. (FG 2: 626–631)

Under the discourse of specialised knowledge, an early childhood qualification is spoken as better than a primary qualification because of the skills that are acquired to work with children in lower primary grades. By producing the early childhood teacher as a specialist teacher with expert knowledge enables the professional identity to be constituted as more important.

7.3 PRODUCING EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER PROFESSIONAL IDENTITIES AS “GLORIFIED BABYSITTER”

The images of child care as a care service for parents, alongside increased workforce participation and supporting the country’s economy, produce the early childhood teacher as a babysitter. This is problematic for the preservice teachers as their four-year university degree afforded them professional status—through the specialised knowledge and expertise that they have acquired. The qualification was read as key, and a way through which they were able to assign power, status and worth to early childhood teacher professional identities. The qualification produces work in child care as glorified and important work. The knowledge that comes with the four-year degree qualification denotes the work in child care as important. Science, notably neuroscience/brain research and child development, also produce this work as glorified.

Yet, these discourses of care and qualification were not separate, and collisions, tensions and intersections were located in these and other discourses that the preservice teachers drew on to speak child care, and work in child care.

The use of irony (Rorty, 1989; Haraway, 1991) as a rhetorical device provides a way to locate these seemingly opposing discourses together to constitute the early childhood teacher professional identities. The early childhood teacher in child care is thus produced as a “glorified babysitter”. This term, initially introduced by a focus group participant Maeve (see Section 7.1.4), is read as an ironic category that enables discourses to be held together. The ironic category glorified babysitter holds together these competing discourses, where both, are necessary and true (Haraway, 1990).

Figure 7.2 captures holding together competing discourses that constitute the early childhood teacher professional identity as glorified babysitter.

Glorified		Babysitter
University-degree qualification	<i>and</i>	Labour force participation
Child development		Service for governments
Neuroscience		Care service for parents

Figure 7.2. Producing early childhood teacher professional identities as “glorified babysitter”.

The early childhood teacher as glorified babysitter is captured in the image in Figure 7.3. This image is made up of three images. The largest depicts an “English nanny”, whose role it is to babysit and provide a care services for families. The babysitter role is glorified through the background image “Glorified Christ in Heaven”. The glorification comes from a degree-qualification/graduation cap, and the accompanying expertise and knowledge. The category of early childhood teacher in child care as glorified babysitter holds together the discourses of babysitter/glorification/qualification/knowledge.



Figure 7.3. Producing the early childhood teacher in child care as “glorified babysitter”.

(Source: Google images)

7.4 THE ABSENCE OF CHILD AS ECONOMIC UNIT

A notable absence in the preservice teachers’ talk was the discourse of the child as an economic unit, mapped in *New Directions* (see Chapter 5, Section 5.4). In *New Directions*, the predominant arguments for the importance of the early years was value for investment. The document carefully sets up the argument that children are the future, and that investing in them in their early years pays off when they grow, develop and mature, and become contributors to society through joining the workforce. Costs are calculated, and the child is discursively produced as an economic unit. Brain research and other scientificity is called into play, all with the purpose of strengthening the view of the child as an investment, and the provision of quality child care works to minimise the risk associated with the investment. More highly qualified teachers will ensure quality child care, quality children, and quality economy.

In the four hours of focus group discussions with the preservice teachers, the term economics was barely used. Over the four conversations, matters related to economics were located three times in the transcripts.

On one occasion Margie spoke about the purpose of child care being to enable “parents to go to work and support the economy” (FG 1: 71). This led onto a rather lengthy conversation about a particular person Rian referred to, who had taken out a large mortgage to buy an expensive house, and at the same time had her child in child care when she didn’t really need to:

But she only works to maintain the mortgage on their house. If they downsized and sold, they could buy a nice little home and own it outright. Because they live in a big house [...] and have the lifestyle and stick the kids in five days, those hours...(FG 4: 495-501)

The reasoning here was that, if the money had rather been saved on a less expensive home, then the child would not *need* to be in care, which was, by implication, less desirable than being at home with a non-working mother.

On another occasion, when explaining why she was not intending to work in child care, Rory made the connection between the wages and the nature of work in child care: “the pay, it’s not like an incentive” (FG 1: 551–552). Here, economics is seen as an issue, but not directly related to the children, rather the professionals who work with the children. Economic matters, if raised at all in the conversations, were generally along these lines.

On only one occasion in the preservice teachers’ talk were economics connected with an image of the child as economic unit. Melissa drew on research and economics and in doing so it became possible to speak children as supporting “our economic future”. This logic was drawn upon to elevate the importance of child care, and to attract attention to the field, and in doing so produce the identities of early childhood teachers as commensurately important with discourses of science/research and economics. Yet in over four hours of focus group data, this was the only place where children and economic outcomes were spoken together. It is therefore significant to note the disconnect between economic discourses read in *New Directions*, and the relative absence of these in the preservice teachers’ talk.

While the design of this study does not allow for constructing a thesis around the absence of talk, or silences, nevertheless it is interesting to pause briefly at this point to consider this marked difference between the preservice teacher talk, and the policy speak. There can be a number of conjectures over this “disconnect” between the economic discourses that were read as dominant in the document-as-text, and not read in the talk-as-text. One possibility might be the lag time between discourses in circulation in newly proposed government (opposition) policy and the talk of preservice teachers. *New Directions* was released January, 2007, and the ideas contained in that document may not have yet come into circulation when the focus groups were conducted with early childhood preservice teachers —March 2007. This

reasoning of course follows a logic that the economic discourses initiated in government and policy speak, and later are filtered down to the early childhood field, and early childhood teacher education.

Another possibility is that the focus group questions did not elicit responses about economics, and were not designed to specifically probe that thinking. As with any focus group interview design, the direction the conversation takes is limited, to varying degrees, by the prompt questions that are asked. It is conceivable that, should a question have been designed to specifically elicit responses to the idea of the child as economic unit, that the data would have yielded different information about the preservice teachers' thinking, and their images of children.

A third possibility, which sits with the theorising applied in this thesis, is that the economic discourse and the idea of the image of the child as economic unit, while predominant in government and policy discourse, is entirely absent from early childhood professional discourse, and therefore unthinkable and unsayable. According to Foucault's discourse theories, the discourse not only defines what is possible to say, but, at the same time, defines what is not possible to say, and speak, when particular discourses are called into play (see Foucault, 1972/1989; 1994a). If this is the case, that early childhood teachers do not access the economic discourse to think and/or speak their work, then this may go some way to explaining some of the historical and contemporary mismatches between policy and practice, between the community and the profession, between the business world that created the corporate child care *industry* and enterprises, and the community kindergartens and not-for-profit kindergartens that eschew any notion of education and care being constructed or conducted as a business.

If this is the case, then this is not simply a case of using a different *language*, but might be understood as an indicator of larger disconnects, between values, ideals, romances and traditions. This may also go some way to explain how people who work in child care are paid so little and yet work such long hours and with such responsibilities. It is possible to suggest that the philanthropic traditions that are ingrained in the origins of child care persist, enabling a workplace where wages and conditions are secondary to other overriding considerations, while at the same time, governments are funding child care centres on predominantly economic principles. This same economic discourse is not operating at the same level when it comes to

more formal schooling. The notion that teachers demand higher pay does not become linked immediately with parents having to pay higher fees for schooling. The economic model operates differently in the before school settings. When combined with the scientificity of brain research, the economic discourse occupies a powerful space in the policy and government text, and yet, in the preservice teachers' talk, it is almost entirely absent. The brain research discourse appears to be taken up with enthusiasm and ease, but not the economics.

The process of mapping discursive constructions employed in this thesis unmistakably highlights a distinct absence of economic discourse in the talk of the preservice teachers, and in contrast, a dominant image of the child as economic unit in the document-as-text. Whether the disconnect can be explained solely in terms of discourse theory is not possible to conclude within the scope of this study. Nevertheless, this is a spectacular mismatch which is worthy of further investigation.

7.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This data chapter has examined the talk-as-text data generated through focus groups with preservice teachers, and has continued the work discussed in Chapter 6. Chapter 7 scrutinised the preservice teachers talk for the ways in which early childhood teacher professional identities were produced. The preservice teachers' talk of images of child care was produced through the discourses that were accessible. Like their talk of images of children in Chapter 6, this was not straightforward, and there were struggles in the ways they spoke the child care field and work in child care settings.

Child care was spoken as service—predominantly for parents, though also, in a connection with *New Directions* (see Chapter 5), for the economy. The image of child care as a care service was dominant in the preservice teachers talk, but there were other images. Neuroscience and child development were drawn on in similar ways to the images of children spoken in Chapter 6, where the early years are “the important years”. This enabled child care to be produced as more than just babysitting, and work in child care was, through these discourses, assigned importance. Child care is “hard work” and people in child care “hard workers” who put up with “shabby” conditions. Thus, child care was spoken as an undesirable career option. However, the preservice teachers were adamant that the nature of child

care work, and their negativity about this, was not about the children. Their work as early childhood teachers, their purpose was “all about the children”—their love of children, their knowledge of children and their expertise with children.

The construction of child care as babysitting did not warrant or legitimate a teaching degree qualification. Power (Foucault, 1984b) came with a university degree as it gave the preservice teachers expert knowledge about neuroscience and child development. Moreover, the degree enabled them to distinguish early childhood teachers from child care workers. The preservice teachers produced early childhood teacher identities at the expense of less qualified child care workers. The early childhood teacher in child care broke the discursive rules—of child care as babysitting; a lesser qualification than a degree was the requirement; and the work in child care was not valued.

One way through the preservice teachers attempted to make sense of the early childhood teacher in child care, was to speak another category—the specialist early childhood teacher in primary school. The choice of career options available, through different early childhood contexts saw the preservice teacher “all getting out of the child care area and move into primary”. Additionally, their specialised knowledge and expertise of the early years produced a very important early childhood teacher—even more important than a primary school teacher.

The struggles in the preservice teachers’ talk of child care and work in child care were once again read through the use of irony (Haraway, 1991; Rorty, 1989). The ironic category of the glorified babysitter enabled competing and colliding discourses to be held together. Child care as a care service/babysitting is held in tension with the neuroscience/child development and qualification discourses. The early childhood teacher in child care is spoken as a babysitter, who cares for children because no one else, including parents or “any other family member”, is able to after them. This care service produces work in child care as not important/not valued. At the same time science and knowledge produce this work is actually very important/valued. A teacher in child care is glorified because of the degree qualification, afforded power and status. Together these discursive tensions produce the category of a glorified babysitter.

A notable absence in the preservice teachers’ talk was the discourse of the child as an economic unit, mapped in *New Directions* (see Chapter 5, Section 5.4). In

New Directions, the predominant arguments for the importance of the early years was value for investment. The preservice teachers barely used the economics in their talk, and when it was spoken it was in connection with wages and child care use. The disconnect between the dominance of economic discourses in the document-as-text and the scarcity of these discourses in the talk-as-text has been illuminated as worthy of further investigation.

This chapter has considered the ways in which the preservice teachers spoke images of child care, and through their talk, produced early childhood teacher professional identities. The following chapter, as the final chapter in this thesis, brings together conclusions from the three data chapters and returns to the Research Question.

Chapter 8: Conclusions

The focus for this inquiry into professional identities of early childhood teachers was prompted by three key experiences. First, my experience teaching in child care, which I found to be liberating and rewarding, compared with other contexts in which I had worked. Next, the policy shifts in play that changed the qualification requirements and called for degree-qualified early childhood teachers to work in child care. Third, my most recent experience working in teacher education, when I observed and encountered preservice teachers' reluctance to pursue child care as a career option.

Early childhood in Australia is currently undergoing significant reform, with a key change proposed to provide "universal access" to preschool for four-year-old children (DEEWR, 2009b; Rudd & Macklin, 2007b). With this initiative has come the requirement for four-year degree-qualified early childhood teachers to work in before-school contexts, including child care. However, early childhood preservice teachers' resistance to work in child care is emerging through small-scale studies (Ailwood & Boyd, 2006; Thorpe et al., 2011; Vadja, 2005a) and reviews of the field (Watson, 2006). This juxtaposition of policy requiring degree-qualified teachers to work in child care, and early childhood teachers' reluctance to do so, presented a starting point for this inquiry.

Early childhood is a complex field involving different contexts that are shaped historically by disparate purposes. Child care, which is just one of the contexts that early childhood teachers are qualified to work in, has been constructed according to rules maintained by discourses of care and the desires to address poverty and disadvantage (Tayler, 2011; Wong, 2006). Part of the purpose of child care has been to provide a service to parents whose participation in paid work necessitates care for their children.

This thesis set out to examine the ways in which early childhood teacher professional identities are produced and maintained. The early childhood teacher in child care was problematised in order to enable different understandings of how their identities are currently shaped. Theories of discourse, power/knowledge, regimes of

truth and resistance (Foucault, 1980a, 1980b, 1984a, 1990a, 1990b) provided analytical tools to consider two data sets: a document-as-text called *New Directions* (Rudd & Macklin, 2007b) and talk-as-text focus group discussions with preservice early childhood teachers. In the genealogical treatment (Foucault, 1984a, 1991) and redescription (Rorty, 1989) of this data, the intersections, collisions and points of tension were scrutinised. These proved useful spaces to consider how the early childhood teacher is currently constituted through “historically specific practices” (Walkerdine, 1993, p. 452). At other points in time, the early childhood teacher would be constituted in other ways, under different discursive conditions. Through Rorty’s (1989) conception of irony, discursive rules and conditions were redescribed in this thesis. Rather than attempting to resolve tensions when contradictions came into play, these contradictions were read as productive when both discourses were necessary and both were true (Haraway, 1991). In this thesis, there was no quest to locate a truth or reason that early childhood teachers did not seek child care as a career pathway; instead, the provocations that were read in the data enabled possibilities of “thinking otherwise” (Ball, 1998, p. 81) about early childhood teacher professional identities, and teacher education.

Chapter 8 addresses the Research Question by presenting a final reading that encompasses both bodies of data— the document-as-text (discussed in Chapter 5) and talk-as-text (discussed in Chapters 6 and 7). This final chapter in the thesis proposes some conclusions of the study. The implications and research significance of this study are explained. The chapter concludes with recommendations for future research directions.

8.1 EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHERS’ PROFESSIONAL IDENTITIES

The key research question that informed this study was:

- How are early childhood teachers’ professional identities currently produced?

The examination of the document and focus groups as text located discourses that produced regimes of truth about child care and work in child care. These discursive rules were read for the ways in which they produced early childhood teacher professional identities. Scrutiny of the data identified ways in which the document and the preservice teachers developed and maintained categories for being

an early childhood teacher. Ways of speaking early childhood teachers were established, resisted and at times re-established.

8.1.1 Document-as-text

The document-as-text *New Directions* (Rudd & Macklin, 2007b) was analysed using a genealogical approach. Genealogy produces “the description of an archive” (Foucault, 1991, p. 59) and enables the location of contradictions, reversals and minute deviations (Foucault, 1984a). *New Directions* draws on discourses of investment/economics and neuroscience/brain research to speak children as “smart productive citizens” (Rudd & Macklin, p. 3). The “scientificity” (Lather, 2006) of these discourses produces power that assigns importance to the early years. Yet this is not any child, but children four years old who will benefit from the universal preschool program. To start with children this age is at odds with the neuroscience that is used in the document to make the case for “earlier investment [which] yields a higher rate of return” (p. 2). According to neuroscience discourse, the critical years for children begin long before their fourth birthday.

The ways in which *New Directions* constructs children positions them for what they will be able to contribute to the “economic prosperity” (p. 4) of the nation in the future. Children are thus produced as “economic units”, with early childhood teachers charged with the responsibility to nurture and mature children into what they will provide for the economy. There is much riding on the shoulders of the four-year qualified teacher who has the knowledge and expertise to provide a quality program, and therefore, ensure that the investment made is worthwhile.

In *New Directions* child care is spoken as necessary, with children firmly positioned on the path of lifelong learning, and future contributors to the health and wealth of the nation. This places the early childhood teacher as key to the economy of the nation. This discursive formation shapes the nature of work in child care. The early childhood teacher professional identity is defined as connected with “the cost of loving”. The discourses of care/nurturance/love that are part of the work of early childhood professionals come together with economics and the corporate world, and conditions both are necessary and both are true (Haraway, 1991). In this thesis, *New Directions* is read as a document that works to elevate the status of the early childhood professional, by first insisting on the importance of children’s early years

as critical for their brain development and learning. At the same time, the document looks past the young children and goes immediately to their future, and the children are reconstructed as economic units, important to the nation's economic future.

8.1.2 Talk-as-text

The talk-as-text focus group discussions with preservice teachers were also scrutinised for the discourses that were drawn on to produce early childhood teacher professional identities. A method of redescription (Rorty, 1989) was applied to locate the points where discourses intersect, compete and collide, and produce new, ironic possibilities.

Through their talk about child care and early childhood, professionals the preservice teachers turned to images of children (see Chapter 6, Section 6.1) and images of child care (see Chapter 7, Section 7.1) in order to describe professional identities. The discourses that were accessible to them competed, collided and connected to form regimes of truth that worked to define what is sayable and unsayable, thinkable and doable as an early childhood teacher. These discursive rules were not always straightforward and in their talk, there were reversals and deviations as preservice teachers worked to produce early childhood teacher professional identities. Categories for being an early childhood teacher were located in this reading of their talk.

In Chapter 6, the early childhood preservice teachers drew in particular on neuroscience/brain research/child development to—describe their images of children and speak of the early years as “the most important years” and of children as “developing in all areas”. Through these discursive rules child care and work in child care were produced in a particular way. The “scientificity” (Lather, 2006) of neuroscience/child development were understood for the preservice teachers as irrefutable “evidence” of the worth and value of the early years. Power (Foucault, 1980a, 1982) is assigned to the early years through these discourses, that make sayable that children are important, and by association, their teachers and child care.

There was consensus and dissensus in the preservice teachers' talk as they spoke the importance of the early years. At times, there was an insistence that children be at home with mothers/parents because of the importance of the early years. Elsewhere it was desirable that children are in child care “from six weeks of

age” so that a teacher is able to provide for what the neuroscience/brain research calls for. The neuroscience/brain research discourse is pervasive and manages to produce two different ways of establishing the importance of the early years.

The “most important years” call for “quality”. Only when a child care centre is of quality is it possible to speak of it as beneficial for children. In fact then, it can serve “a profound purpose”. An assurance that children grow and develop is contingent on the presence of an early childhood teacher, with knowledge and expertise and is able to provide quality.

The importance of the early years produces professional early childhood teachers, who are assigned importance and worth. The discourses accessed in the preservice teachers’ talk allowed them to speak these truths or discursive rules. However, these discourses were not widely understood. Parents were identified as “problems” and who did not “get it”. This distinction between parents (without early childhood qualifications) and early childhood teachers (with specialist expertise) is another device for assigning importance and status to the early childhood teacher professional identity.

A number of ironies were highlighted through the talk-as-text. The ways in which the preservice teachers produced and maintained categories of being an early childhood teacher frequently contained contradictions and seemingly opposing truths. The discourses of neuroscience, child development and quality competed and collided to eventually produce child care as good. The early childhood teacher professional identity is a hero. The early childhood teacher is important in saving children from what fates may await them if they did not participate in a quality child care program. At the same time, the early childhood teacher in child care was a victim, frustrated by the lack of understanding, especially by parents, of the importance of the early years. The early childhood teacher is thus spoken as a heroic victim.

In Chapter 7, the images of child care that were spoken by the early childhood preservice teachers were produced through available discourses that shaped additional rules for child care. Again, this was not straight forward and in their talk, it was possible to identify struggles as the preservice teachers attempted to speak child care, and work in child care. Through their talk further categories of “being” an

early childhood teacher were devised, and early childhood teacher professional identities produced.

The dominance of the care discourse produced the work in child care as babysitting. Along with this construction came talk of “shabby” work conditions in child care. One way through which professional identities were produced as something more than carers was to turn to evidence and “scientificity” (Lather, 2006). Through claims of science knowledge, power and status was assigned to the early years. In order resist to the care discourse, neuroscience/brain research and child development were drawn on to produce early childhood teachers as important, professional and worthy. They were doing important work, not for the money, but because they loved children.

Although child care was hard work and an undesirable career option, the participants were insistent that this undesirability was not about the children. To work in child care called for “a love for children”, and in their talk, the preservice teachers had no hesitation about mentioning love as important in early childhood.

However, at the same time, love alone, worked to reinforce the construction of an early childhood teacher in child care as a babysitting. In order to disrupt this, the talk turned to qualifications, and like in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6, the degree qualification was where power resided (Foucault, 1980a, 1990b). More importantly, not just any qualification is important. The complex qualification/position requirements for work in child care, make it necessary to clarify that it is the degree in which the participants are enrolled that is the most important qualification. A diploma qualification obtained by one particular child care worker, acquired through a lengthy process of study, was dismissed as having limited worth. The preservice teachers were able to produce early childhood teacher professional identities, elevating their own positions while denigrating child care workers, including people who worked in the most senior position of Director. Status was attached to their own qualification, at the expense of other child care workers.

The university degree was spoken as a regime of truth to validate child care and the child care professional—with a degree came knowledge and expertise and the teacher was equipped to provide for what children need. The university also afforded power as it provided career options—“we’re all getting out of the child care area and going into primary”. The early childhood degree was assigned such

importance that it was spoken as more important than a child care qualification (or experience in child care) and more important than a primary teaching qualification. The category of specialist early childhood teacher assigned further importance to an early childhood teacher who chose a career path of working in a primary school. Their specialised knowledge was a way through which the preservice teachers were able to position early childhood teachers as more important and more knowledgeable than primary school teachers.

An ironic category was proposed as a result of reading the preservice teachers' talk of images of child care. A glorified babysitter holds together discourses of child care as a care service/babysitting and the importance assigned through a university degree qualification. As a glorified babysitter, the early childhood teacher in child care is both powerful and powerless (Walkerdine, 1990). Power comes through the university degree. At the same time, the early childhood teacher is rendered powerless through the care discourses that diminish the value of work in the early years.

Princess Diana—a glorified babysitter

A famous image of the late Princess of Wales (see Figure 8.1) serves as a representation of the glorified babysitter as a site where discourses meet, and act to shape beliefs and practices. Diana, then Lady Diana, was described as a “kindergarten teacher”, though the equivalent position in Australia would be a child care worker or playgroup assistant. This was the first image released to the world of the future Queen of England and, as such, was subjected to scrutiny by many people. The image depicts Diana, with a child on her hip and holding the hand of another. Incidentally, Diana was wearing a translucent skirt. The position title of kindergarten teacher, albeit without a teaching qualification, elevates her professional identity and attributes status. Just as the early childhood preservice teachers worked to hold opposing discourses together in tension, this image also brings together some opposing discourses that work to produce an image that depicts work in early childhood.

Diana's work was to care for children, presumably so that their mothers were able to engage in other activities—perhaps paid work, though this nursery school was in an upper middle class part of London. This care work is important work—providing for the needs of the children in her care. It does not require any particular

qualifications, but, for the future Queen of England, it is respectable and honourable. In a sense, Diana is the ultimate glorified babysitter—doing work that is understood to be not demanding, but worthy for a Princess. The early childhood teacher is, at the same time, a carer/babysitter and a degree-qualified specialist.

Traces of the prevailing discourses, in play historically, might also be read into this image of the future Queen. The origin of work in early childhood was predominantly female, middle class, and philanthropic—working to provide opportunities for poor children who were less fortunate. At the same time, this work was historically considered appropriate work for women, because it came “naturally” to them (allowing their “motherly” instincts to come to the fore). Moreover, it was valuable preparation for motherhood, when they would no longer need to be in this paid form of minding other people’s children, because they would have a husband to provide financially, and their role would be one of full-time, unpaid mother. Like the children she holds, Diana’s appearance suggests a motherly natural beauty and innocence—albeit the transparent skirt may have been a mistake.

The understanding of early childhood teaching as some sort of deportment/finishing school for young women is not new (Ailwood, 2008b; Osgood, 2012; Stonehouse, 1994). However, the requirement of a degree qualification is new. In this study, the preservice teachers in the focus groups attempt to rupture this natural and motherly discourse by insisting that child care is more than babysitting. Pointing to their qualifications, their scientific specialised knowledge, and their accountability as indicators of the importance of their (glorified) work they produce early childhood teacher professional identities as important, necessary work.



Figure 8.1. Lady Diana Spencer, “kindergarten teacher”

(Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diana,_Princess_of_Wales#Education)

In the document and text and talk-as-text, three new categories for describing early childhood professional identities were proposed. In *New Directions*, “the cost of loving” seemed to be a key concern of the document and the proposed policy reforms. This category is a means to hold together the discourses of care (nurturing, love) with the economics discourse. The heroic victim brings together the image of the child (neuroscience /child development) that insists that young children’s early years are critical in their development, with the image of the child as free, playful and innocent, and therefore not yet in need of education, learning, nor a teacher. The glorified babysitter, like Lady Diana, holds together notions of care service/babysitting with something important and special—in this case, a degree qualification, and the knowledge and expertise that goes with a university education.

In the following section, the discussion now turns to readings of the document and talk together, and how this might suggest new possibilities for thinking about child care, the early childhood teacher professional identities, and what these understandings might mean for early childhood teacher educators.

8.1.3 Document and talk

Reading across both the document-as-text and talk-as-text, it is possible to locate both points of agreement and points of departure. *New Directions* and the focus group discussions were both located in a discursive field that spoke the early

years as important. Neuroscience/child development was read in both data sets, and made sayable that the early years are important, and warrant attention. In *New Directions*, this attention was proposed through investment, and part of this expenditure was to fund four-year degree-qualified early childhood teachers in child care. For the preservice teachers, attention to the early years was also called for through the knowledge that was acquired through holding a early childhood degree qualification. Across both data sets, the quality discourse came together with neuroscience/brain research/child development to add further weight to the argument for early childhood teachers, and thus, assign legitimacy to their professional identities.

At the same time as these discursive devices worked across both sets of data, there were notable disconnections. First, the economic/investment discourses predominant in *New Directions* were scarcely mentioned in the preservice teachers' talk. The absence of the economics discourse in the preservice teachers talk might suggest a gap between policy and content in early childhood teacher education. This might be explained by a lag in time, with *New Directions* ahead of teacher educators. Or, another possibility is that policy is not a feature of course design in teacher education.

Another disconnection between the data sets was located in the ways that images of children were spoken. The value that was assigned to children in *New Directions*, for the economic future of the country, was not a match with the value assigned to children by the preservice teachers. *New Directions* produced children as "economic units" for what they will be able to contribute to the economy in the future. The preservice teachers spoke of children, more as children, "not half formed" and people in their own right. There was a disconnect between government policy that valued children for the future and early childhood teachers' talk that valued children for who they are now.

The process of mapping discursive constructions employed in this thesis unmistakably highlights a distinct absence of economic discourse in the talk of the preservice teachers, and in contrast, a dominant image of the child as economic unit in the document-as-text. Whether the disconnect can be explained solely in terms of discourse theory is not possible to conclude within the scope of this study. Nevertheless, this is a spectacular mismatch which is worthy of further investigation.

There was struggle in the early childhood preservice teachers' talk as they attempted to reconcile how their four-year degree as an "investment" (McNay, 1992) was simultaneously valued and not valued. The neuroscience and child development research spoke the regime of truth that the early years are "the most important". It seemed that the early childhood the university degree was important for the early years. Yet, the degree qualification was not important for the context of child care. If child care was care, and work in child care was hard with shabby conditions, then "why would you?" work in child care if you had a degree qualification. According to the preservice teachers' talk the worth of doing an early childhood degree is contingent on status. In their talk the preservice teachers define the early childhood context where status is assigned and the degree qualification is afforded legitimacy—a primary school.

A degree-qualified early childhood teacher in child care broke the discursive rules. It was not permissible to be degree-qualified in child care, and be professional, acknowledged and validated. This collision of discourses unsettled the production of early childhood teacher professional identities. A teacher in child care required new and different categories to be created, and these were not yet clear to the preservice teachers.

This inquiry points to the losses and gains as the focus on professionalism in early childhood is defined, at least partially, through a degree qualification. Moss (2010) cautions "we need well-educated educators, but what do we gain by the focus on 'professionalism'?" (p. 18). The new regime of truth, the logic that produces an early childhood educator in child care, it seems is at least partially produced by the length, nature and type of qualification. For early childhood teachers, this degree qualification affords career possibilities to seek employment in a number of early childhood contexts—child care included. At the same time they are afforded highest status and power, the preservice teachers dismiss child care as a consideration in their future career plans, or are actively seeking a way "out of child care" through the acquisition of a higher qualification.

8.2 IMPLICATIONS AND SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

This thesis has gone some way to make visible some of the dominant and taken for granted discourses that historically constitute (Foucault, 1990b, p. 9) early

childhood teacher professional identities. New questions about professional identities in early childhood have been raised. These new questions have potential to prompt re-thinking of government policy, as well as aspects of early childhood teacher education course design. The readings of the document-as-text and talk-as-text present challenges to early childhood teachers, and the field, about conceptions of child care and work in child care. The implications and significance of this study are outlined below, drawing on a number of ways that this study will contribute to thinking about early childhood teacher professional identities.

8.2.1 Negativity about child care and work in child care

One of the provocations for this research was the frequently overheard negative remarks by preservice teachers about child care, and work in child care. Evidence from this study shows that this negativity was even more prevalent than anticipated. Students frequently constructed child care as being chiefly “for parents who need a service” and “just babysitting”. This is in contrast with *New Directions* and the current policy imperatives, where there is a call for the integration of care and education. The preservice teachers also frequently spoke of parents using child care as a “dumping ground” and parents who “do not understand” the importance of the work in child care. One of the key purposes of early childhood centres, as outlined in current policy, is to support parental involvement in paid work—and provide educational and learning programs for children. There is an irony in the preservice teachers’ exasperation with what they see as a devaluing of child care and work in child care, while all along, much of their own talk indicates that they themselves place little value on work in this field. But, it is not the children who are the problem, and it is not them who are the problem. While they hold very strong views of the importance and value of children, they talk of “others” (not professionals) who fail to “see the beauty in the children”, and they talk of the government that fails to adequately fund the field.

Possibly the most troubling of the preservice teachers’ negative talk about child care is levelled at the people who work in child care. While they acknowledge that this is “hard work” and “an important job for children”, the preservice teachers talk borders on venomous when they refer to staff who “stand there with [...] coffees” and “[...] can’t read or [...] can’t write or [...] can’t speak properly”. This talk produces images of people who work in child care as unskilled, uneducated, and in stark

contrast to the professional identities that the preservice teachers worked hard to produce. At the expense of their colleagues who work in child care, these preservice teachers afford themselves power, status and professional worth through identities “other” than child care. Logically, this leads to their aspirations for future employment, as captured in Ruth’s declaration:

...we’re all getting out of the childcare area and going into primary.

This study drew on four focus groups with preservice teachers, with 18 participants and does not claim that these views are representative of the early childhood field. The point of interest here is that these negative constructions of child care, child care use, and work in child care, exist in tension with the proposed new directions in government policy. *New Directions* and other policy directives insist that child care is more than babysitting and standing around drinking coffee. The focus is on learning, education and staff qualifications.

8.2.2 Policy and preservice teachers’ talk mismatch

This study builds on existing studies that have considered early childhood teachers’ professional identities (see Chapter 2, Section 2.4), and it will come as no surprise to those who know the field, that work in child care is problematic. What this study adds is the scrutiny of policy read alongside preservice teachers’ talk. The predominance of investment/economics discourses—notable in *New Directions* and notably absent in the focus groups—marks a distinct mismatch between policy and the upcoming early childhood workforce. Presumably these are the people who will be enacting the policy. The discourses of investment/economics produce images of children as “smart productive citizens”. They are seen and valued—not for who they are now, but rather what they will contribute to the economy in the future.

In contrast the early childhood preservice teachers’ speak of children as “capable and competent”; “building relationships”; “learning through play”. Such images speak children for here and now, with rights, not for who they will become.

In *New Directions* the images of children, as future contributors to the economy of the nation, in turn produce a different identity for the early childhood teacher. The shift here is from a carer who nurtures and facilitates children’s development to a “banker” who is charged with the responsibility of ensuring value for investment, and oversees children as “economic units”. According to *New*

Directions, the quality of early childhood education is directly related to Australia's economic success. If this quality falls short, then Australia runs the risk of becoming "China's quarry and Japan's beach". This seems a long way from the preservice teachers' concerns, typified by Leith—it's "all about the children".

This mismatch between policy and the workforce who are called upon to action the policy presents a significant implication for this research. One problem is the implications of preservice teachers who speak openly of their reluctance to work in child care, when this is a matter on the national agenda in Australia (COAG, 2008, 2009). Secondly, preservice early childhood teachers resist the notion of children as commodities — preferring instead to speak of children for here and now, not for who they will become and certainly not directly connected the economy of nation. The investment-for-the-future argument in *New Directions* is not part of the philosophical underpinnings that are currently shaping the workforce. The preservice teachers want to believe that care is important and children are important.

In their attempts to produce the identities of early childhood teachers as valid and important the preservice teachers look for ways of understanding children and their teachers that add value. Neuroscience/brain research/child development assigns importance to the early years of life and, in turn, add status and worth that legitimates early childhood teacher professional identities. But, like all discourses, each can act to both enable and constrain, and early childhood teachers may find that the discourses they call on to empower and add status, can, at the same time, work to produce a kind of child and a kind of teacher that they have not anticipated. For instance, if neuroscience/brain research works to emphasise the importance of learning in the early years, then one effect might be an emphasis on academic achievements over play. The celebration of brain over body produces a different child, who requires a particular teacher.

The mismatch between policy and preservice teachers' talk also has implications for teacher education, for how contemporary policy is considered and integrated into course design and program content. The disconnections between the policy *New Directions* and the preservice teachers' talk, particularly around economic discourses, highlights the importance to look closely at teacher education and to examine the location, or absence of contemporary policy foci. It has been noted elsewhere in this thesis that the policy and the focus group data were generated

within months of each other. Therefore it would be reasonable to expect a lag in the take up of discourses in the policy. Nonetheless discourses of investment/economics are not new and have been in circulation for some time (Cleveland & Krashinsky, 1998, 2003; Cunha et al., 2005; Dodge, 2003). Therefore a further significance of this study is the importance to examine preservice teacher education courses for connections, or disconnections, with contemporary policy.

8.2.3 Qualifications

Another implication of this study is the significance placed on the four-year university-degree qualification, in both the policy and the preservice teachers' talk. A key driver of quality in early childhood education, according to the current early childhood reforms, is qualifications of the teacher—another important factor identified in this study as contributing to the construction of early childhood teacher professional identities. As the “gold star” qualification for early childhood, the four-year degree requirement to work in child care presents new discursive rules for being an early childhood teacher at this point in time. The existing ways of understanding roles, positions and qualifications has been disrupted through this shift. This research makes a timely contribution to make visible some of the assumptions about qualifications in the preservice teachers' talk. The elevation of “the degree” and denigration of unqualified and TAFE-acquired qualifications further highlights tensions that warrant further attention. Such tensions are in contrast to calls in *New Directions* for bringing together education and care and to focus on integration.

At the point of this thesis being near submission, a report was released *Early years workforce strategy: The early childhood education and care workforce strategy for Australia* (Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood [SCSEEC], 2012). Two of the five key priority areas in the report have alignment with the findings of this inquiry into early childhood teachers' professional identities. Priorities 1 and 3 state: “A professional workforce” and “A qualified workforce”. Indicators of a professional workforce were spoken as “families and communities recognise that ECEC educators have specialist skills and knowledge that supports the development and learning of children” (SCSEEC, 2012, p. 8). Other indicators were around professional development and job satisfaction. Indicators of a “qualified workforce” included “Increased numbers of educators have qualifications to support the reforms, including the NQF and Universal Access” (p. 12). The prominence of

staff qualifications indicate that the issue of qualified staff in child care/the early childhood teacher in child care remains as pressing as it was at the commencement of my study.

This inquiry into early childhood teachers' professional identities has gone some way to exploring the complexities around the early childhood teacher in child care. The inquiry makes visible the discourses that were accessible to preservice teachers as they spoke about children and work in child care, and through this talk, produced early childhood teacher professional identities. The images of children and images of child care provide provocations to consider preservice teacher education course design. In particular, how child care, as one of the early childhood contexts, is located, conceptualised and spoken throughout the course. Consideration by course designers and teacher educators of what discourses are privileged in course content—what discourses are diminished or silenced—would go some way to reconceptualising child care within preservice teacher education and challenging dominant ways of speaking child care, and work in child care.

This research illuminates the complexity of early childhood teacher professional identities, and some of the discourses as regimes of truth that produce these identities. As the profession attempts and struggles to hold together education and care, and in doing so, re-envision the work in traditionally understood education/preschool and care/child care, the work within these contexts has become more complex.

The discursive tensions between early childhood education and early childhood care are complex, produced through historical constituted practices. The early childhood field is in a rapid state of change, and this inquiry has examined some of the disconnects between policy and practice. Ongoing awareness of the discourses that are in play in the field will continue to allow space for conversations that challenge dominant assumptions about child care, work in child care and ways of being an early childhood teacher in child care.

8.3 FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The implications and significance of this study indicate a number of possible ways forward for future research that would continue conversations about early childhood teacher professional identities. Further research into the complexities of

work in early childhood, in different contexts, will add to understandings about work in the field of early childhood. Research methodologies that work with discourse (Foucault, 1980a) and contingencies (Rorty, 1989), will provide valuable ways to continue to look anew at the early childhood profession. Future research directions are proposed in relation to policy, early childhood preservice teacher education and the early childhood workforce.

8.3.1 Policy

Given the mismatch in policy and the preservice teachers' talk, future research that pays attention to policy analysis, particularly workforce issues, is suggested. Valuable questions to ask would be: What early childhood teacher professional identities are produced through contemporary policies?, What images of children are located in policies in early childhood? and What early childhood teacher professional identities are called for through these images of children?

Research by Mitchell (2010) has provided insights into how policies in early childhood in New Zealand are shaped by constructions of children and childhood. This process provides understandings about discourses that shape policies and how discourses might be disrupted. Similar work with Australian contemporary policy documents would do some way to making visible the discourses that are in circulation to produce images of children, and professional identities of early childhood teachers.

8.3.2 Early childhood preservice teacher education

Further research into preservice teacher education programs would generate important insights into course design and content. Research within preservice teacher education programs has the potential to map, over a period of time, some of the discourses that shape preservice teachers' thinking about child care during their experience in the course. Longitudinal studies, with before and after comparisons across courses, would provide possibilities to consider early childhood teacher retention in different contexts.

Studies in the United States (for example, Whitebook & Ryan, 2011), New Zealand (Mitchell, 2008) and the United Kingdom (Osgood, 2006, 2012), alongside OECD data (2006) provide reference points for designing research within the Australian context. A focus in Australia that looks closely at early childhood course

content, and the discourses that preservice teachers encounter will add to a growing body of work (Langford, 2005, 2007; Warren, 2013) about what is what is privileged in early childhood teacher education, and how dominant discourses shape, and re-shape early childhood teacher professional identities over the duration of the course.

As a methodology Foucauldian-informed discourse analysis would be a valuable tool to scrutinise some of the discourses that are dominant, those diminished, and even those absent, in course programs. Questions to ask may include: What discourses are privileged and what discourses are silenced in early childhood preservice teacher education? and How are these discourses privileged or silenced in early childhood preservice teacher education?

Additionally, given the marked mismatch between policy and the preservice teachers' talk it is suggested that particular attention be afforded to investment/economic discourses and to ask: How are economic discourses located/spoken in early childhood teacher education? and How are current government policy agendas incorporated, scrutinised and critiqued in early childhood teacher education?

Given the preservice teachers' negative talk about child care, and work in child care, close attention to the ways in which child care is positioned and spoken in courses would be important to consider in future research. A good place to start would be: How and where is child care positioned in early childhood preservice teacher education? and How is child care spoken in early childhood preservice teacher preparation? Another important question to ask would be: How does early childhood teacher education influence career pathway preferences, particularly work in child care?

8.3.3 Workforce

Finally, given the conclusions of this study, and the ongoing policy focus on early childhood teachers in child care, a sustained research focus on the early childhood workforce is called for. The government policy agenda that calls for degree-qualified early childhood teachers to work in before-school contexts warrants research examining the experiences of early childhood teachers in child care. Such research would build on this study, and provide further insights into professional identities of early childhood teachers who choose to work in child care. Valuable

questions that would build on the work in this thesis would be: How are the professional identities of early childhood teachers who choose to work in child care constituted? and What are the experiences of early childhood teachers in child care, and what conditions lead to attribution and retention?

It is suggested that a future research focus on early childhood teacher career pathways may go some way to examining further the ways in which professional identities are constituted in different early childhood contexts. Graduate data surveys provide a starting point for mapping preservice teachers' career pathways at the point of exiting their university degree. Further research into early childhood teacher career pathways would be valuable to examine which early childhood contexts teachers seek, attain and retain work. A good place to start would be to look closely at career pathways over a period of time, with attention to movements between different early childhood contexts. It is suggested that a longitudinal study that tracked teachers in the field, in different contexts, would further contribute to understandings of the ways in which early childhood teacher professional identities are shaped.

8.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Early childhood in Australia is part of the so-called education revolution, with the early years reform agenda flagging new directions. These directions have implications, through the discursive rules that they speak, for the production of early childhood teacher professional identities. Situating a four-year university-qualified teacher in child care disrupts the discursive rules that had previously shaped child care and the work in child care settings. The shifts break down and rupture discursive boundaries, and necessitate "border wars" (Haraway, 1991) in which discourses of education/care and teacher/carer/babysitter are held together.

This thesis contributes to an ongoing research conversation that theorises early childhood professional identities. Making visible some of the ways in which child care and the work in child care settings are constituted through the discourses that are at play brings new understandings to early childhood policy provision, preservice teacher education and the field more broadly. Altering "one's way of looking at things" provides possibilities to "change the boundaries of what one knows" (Foucault, 1990a, p. 11). Early childhood is a field that is undergoing immense

change. The proliferation of policy documents is shifting discourses and introducing new discourses that work to shape the field as well as the production and maintenance of early childhood teacher professional identities.

This study looked to the complexities and contingencies in the production of these identities. The purpose of the inquiry was not to seek answers about early childhood career choices; instead, the early childhood teacher in child care was problematised to make visible some of the regimes of truth that speak about child care and work child care. This thesis marks a departure from a regime of truth that restricts early childhood teachers to one way of being, acting, speaking and performing. To explore the complexities of early childhood teacher identities, it was necessary, through the theoretical underpinnings of this study, to resist the logic that identities are set and rigid. Embracing the possibilities of reading, locating and rupturing dominant ways of thinking and speaking about the early childhood teacher creates important and necessary spaces for reconsidering the ways in which the field is currently discursively constituted.

References

- ABC Learning Centres Limited. (2005). *ABC Learning Centres Limited Annual Report*. Brisbane: ABC Learning Centres.
- ABC Learning Centres Limited. (2006). *ABC Learning Centres Annual Report*. Brisbane: ABC Learning Centres.
- ABC News Online (2011, November 15). ABC Learning gets a new name. Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yh1h_dcFECA&feature=youtu.be
- Access Economics. (2009). *An economic analysis of the proposed ECEC National Quality Agenda*. Canberra, ACT: Report by Access Economics Pty Limited for DEEWR.
- Adams, K. (2008). What's in a name? Seeking professional status through degree studies within the Scottish early years context. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 16(2), 196-209.
- Ailwood, J. (2003a). Governing early childhood education through play. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 4(3), 286-299.
- Ailwood, J. (2003b). *Governing preschool: Producing and managing preschool education in Queensland government schools*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Queensland, Brisbane.
- Ailwood, J. (2008a). Learning or earning in the 'Smart State': Changing tactics for governing early childhood. *Childhood: A Global Journal of Child Research*, 15(4), 535-551.
- Ailwood, J. (2008b). Mothers, teachers, maternalism and early childhood education and care: Some historical connections. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 8(2), 157-165.
- Ailwood, J., & Boyd, W. (2006, July 5-8). *First year early childhood education students' beliefs about children in long day care*. Paper presented at the Australian Teacher Education Association Conference, Fremantle, W.A.
- Ainsworth, M. D. S., Blehar, M.C., Waters, E., & Wall, S. (1978). *Patterns of attachment: A psychological study of the strange situation*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Alvesson, M. (2002). *Postmodernism and social research*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

- American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, & National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care. (2002). *Caring for our children: National health and safety performance standards. Guidelines for out-of-home child care programs* (2nd ed.). Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics and Washington, D.C.: American Public Health Association.
- Arthur, L., Beecher, B., Death, E., Dockett, S., & Farmer, S. (2012). *Programming and planning in early childhood settings* (5th ed.). South Melbourne: Thomson.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). (2011a). *50 years of labour force statistics: Now and then*. Retrieved from <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4102.0Main+Features30Dec+2011#changing>
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). (2011b). *4402.0 - Childhood Education and Care, Australia, June 2011*. Retrieved from <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Products/4402.0~June+2011~Main+Features~Main+features?OpenDocument>
- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA). (2012). *National Regulations*. Retrieved from <http://acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework/national-regulations/>
- Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). (2012). *The shape of the Australian curriculum (Version 3)*. Sydney: ACARA.
- Australian Electoral Commission (AEC). (2007). The Official 2007 Federal Election Results. Retrieved from <http://results.aec.gov.au/13745/Website/Default.htm>
- Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC). (2010). Children's Services Award 2010. Retrieved from <http://www.fwa.gov.au/awardsandorders/html/PR991088.htm>
- Australian Labor Party (ALP). (2007). *The Australian Economy needs an education revolution: New Directions on the critical link between long term prosperity, productivity growth and human capital investment*. Canberra, ACT: ALP.
- Australian Labor Party (ALP). (2012). Australian Labor - Our values. Retrieved from <http://www.alp.org.au/australian-labor/our-values/>
- Ball, S. (1998). Educational studies, policy entrepreneurship and social theory. In R. Slee, G. Weiner & S. L. F. Tomlinson (Eds.), *School effectiveness for whom?* (pp. 70-83). London, UK: Falmer.
- Baxter, J. (2002). A juggling act: A feminist post-structuralist analysis of girls' and boys' talk in the secondary classroom. *Gender and Education*, 14(1), 5-19.
- Baxter, J., Hewitt, B., & Haynes, M. (2008). Life course transitions and housework: Marriage, parenthood and time on housework. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 70(2), 259-272.

- Bazeley, P., & Richards, L. (2000). *The NVivo qualitative data project book*. London, UK: Sage.
- Beaty, J. (2004). *Skills for preschool teachers* (7th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Belsky, J. (1990). Developmental risks associated with infant daycare: Attachment, insecurity, non-compliance and aggression. In S. Chehrazai (Ed.), *Psychosocial Issues in Daycare* (pp. 37-68). Washington, D.C.: American Psychiatric Press.
- Belsky, J., Melhuish, E., Barnes, J., Leyland, A. H., & Romaniuk, H. (2006). Effects of Sure Start local programmes on children and families: Early findings from a quasi-experimental, cross sectional study. *British Medical Journal*, 332 (7556), 1476-1478. doi:10.1136/bmj.38853.451748.2F.
- Bennett, J. (2005). *The OECD Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care Policy. Learning with other countries: International models of early education and care*. London, UK: Daycare Trust.
- Bentley, C. (2000). *The complete book of Thunderbirds: Foreword by Gerry Anderson, creator of the Thunderbirds*. London, UK: Carlton.
- Berk, L. E. (2009). *Child development* (8th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Berk, L. E., & Winsler, A. (1995). *Scaffolding children's learning: Vygotsky and early childhood education* (Vol. 7). Washington, D.C.: NAEYC.
- Biddulph, S. (2006). *Raising babies: Should under 3s go to nursery?* London, UK: Harper Thorsons.
- Biddulph, S. (2008). *Raising boys: Why boys are different and how to help them become happy and well mannered men* (2nd ed.). North Sydney, NSW.: Ten Speed Press.
- Bloch, M. (2010). Foreword. In M. O'Loughlin, & Johnson, R. T. (Eds.), *Imagining children otherwise: Theoretical and critical perspectives on childhood subjectivity*. (pp. ix-xii). New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Bloor, M., Frankland, J., Thomas, M., & Robson, K. (2001). *Focus groups in social research*. London, UK: SAGE.
- Bown, K., Sumsion, J., & Press, F. (2009). Influence on politicians' decision making for early childhood education care policy: What do we know? What don't we know? *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 10(3), 194-217. doi:10.2304/ciec.2009.10.3.194
- Bown, K., Sumsion, J., & Press, F. (2010). Dark matter: The 'gravitational pull' of maternalist discourses on politicians' decision making for early childhood policy in Australia. *Gender and Education*, 1(18), 265-280.
- Braidotti, R. (1994). *Nomadic subjects: Embodiment and sexual difference in contemporary feminist theory*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

- Braidotti, R. (2003). Becoming woman: Or sexual difference revisited. *Theory, culture & society*, 20(43), 43-64.
- Bredekamp, S. (1987). *Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs serving children from birth through to age 8*. Washington, D.C.: NAEYC.
- Bredekamp, S., & Copple, C. (Eds.). (1997). *Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs*. Washington, D.C.: NAEYC.
- Bredekamp, S., & Copple, C. (2009). *Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs: Serving children from birth through age 8*. (3rd ed.). Washington, D.C.: NAEYC.
- Brennan, D. (1998). *The politics of Australian child care: From philanthropy to feminism* (Revised ed.). Melbourne, Vic.: Cambridge University Press.
- Brennan, D. (2007). The ABC of Child Care Politics. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 42(2), 213-225.
- Bresler, L. (1994). Zooming in on the qualitative paradigm in art education: Educational criticism, ethnography, and action research. *Visual Arts Research*, 20(1), 1-19.
- Britzman, D. P. (2000). 'The question of belief': Writing postructural ethnography. In E. St. Pierre and S. W. S. Pillow (Eds.), *Working the ruins: Feminist poststructural theory and methods in education*. (pp. 27-47). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bruner, J. (1966). *Towards a theory of instruction*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bruner, J. (1978). The role of dialogue in language acquisition. In A. Sinclair, R. Jarvella & W. J. M. Levelt (Eds.), *The child's conception of language*. (pp. 241-256). New York: Springer-Verlag.
- Bruner, J. (1996). *The culture of education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Burman, E. (1994). *Deconstructing developmental psychology*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Burman, E. (2001). Beyond the baby and the bathwater: Postdualistic developmental psychologies for diverse childhoods. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 9(1), 5-22. doi:10.1080/13502930185208651
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. London, UK: Routledge.

- Butler, J. (1997). *Excitable speech: A politics of the performative*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Butler, J. (2005). *Giving an account of oneself*. New York, NY: Fordham University Press.
- Butler, J. (2008). "An account of oneself". In B. Davies (Ed.), *Judith Butler in conversation: Analyzing the texts and talk of everyday life* (pp. 19-38). New York, NY: Taylor & Francis Group.
- Butler, J. (2011). Your behaviour creates your gender. Retrieved from <http://bigthink.com/ideas/30766>
- Caldwell, R. (2007). Agency and change: Re-evaluating Foucault's legacy. *Organization*, 14(6), 769-792.
- Cannella, G. (1997). *Deconstructing early childhood education: Social justice and revolution*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Cannold, L. (2001). Interviewing adults. In G. MacNaughton, S. Rolfe & I. Siraj-Blatchford (Eds.), *Doing Early Childhood Research: International perspectives on theory and practice* (pp. 178-192). Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin.
- Carr, M., & Mitchell, L. (2010). Qualified teachers in early childhood centres: Do we need them? *Kindergartens' Greatstart 100% Occasional paper*. Retrieved from <http://issues.co.nz/greatstart100/Qualified+teachers+in+early+childhood+centres%3A+do+we+need+them%3F>
- Carter, M., & Curtis, D. (1998). *The visionary director: A handbook for dreaming, organizing, improvising in your center*. St Paul, MN: Redleaf Press.
- Cathcart, M. (2012, March 18). *William Kentridge: Five Themes* [Audio podcast]. Retrieved from <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/booksandartsdaily/william-kentridge3b-five-themes/3876808>
- Christensen, C., & Dwyer, A. E. (2004). Performing focus groups: Unsettling 'blueprints'. In E. McWilliam, S. Danby & J. Knight (Eds.), *Performing educational research : Theories, methods and practices* (pp. 1-14). Flaxton, Qld: Post Pressed.
- Cleveland. G., & Krashinsky, M. (1998). *The benefits and costs of good child care: The economic rationale for policy investment in young children - A policy study*. Scarborough, Toronto: University of Toronto.
- Cleveland. G., & Krashinsky, M. (2003). *Financing ECEC services in OECD countries*. Paris, France: OECD.
- Colley, H. (2006). Learning to labour with feeling: Class, gender and emotion in child care education and training. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 7(1), 15-29.

- Cooper, D., Hersh, A., (The Center for American Progress), & O'Leary, A., (The Center for the Next Generation). (2012). *The competition that really matters: Comparing U.S., Chinese and Indian investments in the next-generation workforce*. Washington, D.C.: The Center for American Progress & The Center for the Next Generation.
- Coorey, P. (2007). Rudd vows education revolution. *Sydney Morning Herald*. Retrieved from <http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/rudd-vows-education-revolution/2007/01/22/1169330827940.html>
- Council of Australian Governments (COAG). (2006). *Council of Australian Governments' Meeting 10 February 2006*. Retrieved 23 May 2006, from http://www.coag.gov.au/coag_meeting_outcomes/2006-02-10/index.cfm#child
- Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Communiqué. (2007). *Council of Australian Governments' Meeting Melbourne 20 December 2007*. Retrieved 20 May 2008, from <http://www.coag.gov.au/node/293>
- Council of Australian Governments (COAG). (2008). *A national quality framework for early childhood education and care. A discussion paper*. Canberra, ACT: Council of Australian Governments.
- Council of Australian Governments (COAG). (2009a). *National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education*. Canberra, ACT: Council of Australian Governments.
- Council of Australian Governments (COAG). (2009b). *Investing in the Early Years: A National Early Childhood Development Strategy*. Canberra, ACT: Council of Australian Governments
- Council of Australian Governments (COAG). (2009c). *National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care*. ACT: Council of Australian Governments.
- Cowman, K., & Jackson, L. A. (2005). Middle-class women and professional identity. *Women's History Review*, 14(2), 165-180.
- Creswell, J. W. (1997). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J. W. (2005). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (2nd ed.). New Jersey, NJ: Pearson.
- Cunha, F., & Heckman, J. (2010). *Investing in our young people. Working Paper 16201*. Retrieved from <http://www.nber.org/papers/w16201>
- Cunha, F. J., Heckman, L., Lochner, L., & Masterov, D. V. (2005). *Interpreting the evidence of the life-cycle skill formation, IZA Discussion Paper Series, No 1575*. Bonn, Germany: Institute for the Study of Labour, July.
- Dahlberg, G., & Moss, P. (2005). *Ethics and politics in early childhood education*. Oxfordshire. UK: Routledge Falmer.

- Dahlberg, G., Moss, P., & Pence, A. (2007). *Beyond quality in early childhood education and care: Languages of evaluation* (2nd ed.). London, UK: Taylor & Francis.
- Dalli, C. (2002). Constructing identities: Being a "Mother" and being a "Teacher" during the experience of starting childcare. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 10(2), 85-101.
- Dalli, C. (2010). Pedagogy, knowledge and collaboration: Towards a ground-up perspective on professionalism. In C. Dalli & M. Urban (Eds.), *Professionalism in early childhood education and care: International perspectives* (pp. 40-54). Oxon, UK: Routledge.
- Darling-Hammond, L., & Bransford, J. (Eds.). (2009). *Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should learn and be able to do*. San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass A Wiley Imprint.
- Darling-Hammond, L., Hammerness, K., with Grossman, P., Rust, F., & Shulman, L. (2009). The design of teacher education programs. In L. Darling-Hammond & J. Bransford (Eds.), *Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should learn and be able to do* (pp. 390-441). San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass A Wiley Imprint.
- Davies, B. (1993). *Shards of glass: Children reading and writing beyond gendered identities*. St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin.
- Davies, B. (2003). *Frogs and snails and feminist tales: Preschool children and gender* (Revised ed.). Creswell, NJ: Hampton Press Inc.
- Davies, B. (2004/2006). Identity, abjection and otherness: Creating the self, creating difference. In M. Arnot & M. Mac an Ghaill (Eds.), *The RoutledgeFalmer reader in gender and education* (pp. 72-90). Milton Park, SA: Routledge.
- Davies, B., & Harre, R. (1990). Positioning: The discursive production of selves. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 20(1), 43-63.
- Day, C., Kington, A., Stobart, G., & Sammons, P. (2006). The personal and professional selves of teachers: stable and unstable identities. *British Educational Research Journal*, 32(4), 601-616.
- de Botton, A. (2005). *Status anxiety*. London, UK: Penguin Books.
- de Botton, A. (2009). *The pleasures and sorrows of work*. London, UK: Penguin Books Limited.
- Department of Education and Training (DET). (2011). *Early childhood education and care workforce action plan*. Retrieved from <http://deta.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood/pdfs/workforce-action-plan.pdf>
- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). (2008). *Building Opportunities for All Australians: Early Childhood Education National Partnership*. Barton, ACT: DEEWR.

- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). (2009a). *Belonging, being & becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia*. Barton, ACT: DEEWR.
- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). (2009b). *Early Childhood Education- Universal Access*. Retrieved from http://www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/Policy_Agenda/ECUA/Pages/home.aspx
- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). (2009c). *National Early Years Workforce Strategy*. Barton, ACT: DEEWR.
- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). (2012). *National quality framework for early childhood education and care*. Barton, ACT: DEEWR.
- Department for Education and Skills (DfES). (2005). *Children's workforce strategy: Building a world-class workforce for children, young people and families*. London, UK: DfES.
- Derman-Sparks, L. (1989). *Anti-bias curriculum: Tools for empowering young people*. New York: NAEYC.
- Derman-Sparks, L., & Edwards, J. O. (2010). *Anti-bias education for young children and ourselves*. New York: NAEYC.
- Dingle, S. (2012, January 2). Mixed blessings from new childcare rules. *7.30 Report*. ABC television.
- Dodge, D. (2003). *Human Capital, early childhood development, and economic growth: An economist's perspective*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Sparrow Lake Alliance, Ontario, Canada.
- Doherty, G., Friendly, M., & Olomon, M. (1998). *Women's support, women's work: Child care in an era of deficit reduction, devolution, downsizing and deregulation*. Retrieved from http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/pubs/pubspr/0662634705/199803_0662634705_e.pdf
- Doiron, D., & Kalb, G. (2005). Demands for child care and household labour supply in Australia. *Economic Record*, 81(254), 215-236.
- Dwyer, A. (2006). *Teaching girls a lesson: The fashion model as pedagogue*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane.
- Early, D. M., Maxwell, K. L., Burchinal, M., Alva, S., Bender, R. H., Bryant, D., et al. (2007). Teacher's education, classroom quality, and young children's academic skills: Results from seven studies of preschool programs. *Child Development*, 78(2), 558-580.

- Edwards, A. (2001). Qualitative designs and analysis. In G. MacNaughton, S. Rolfe & I. Siraj-Blatchford (Eds.), *Doing early childhood research: International perspectives on theory and practice* (pp. 117-135). Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin.
- Edwards, C. P. (2002). Three approaches from Europe: Waldorf, Montessori and Reggio Emilia. *Early Childhood Research and Practice*, 4(1).
- Eliot, L. (1999). *What's going on in there? How the brain and mind develop in the first five years of life*. London, UK: Penguin.
- Elkind, D. (2009). *The hurried child 25th anniversary edition: Growing up too fast too soon*. Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press.
- Ellis, K. (2009, 24 October). *2009 KU Annual Seminar: The Voice of Early Childhood Pedagogy and Leadership*. Retrieved from http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Ellis/Media/Speeches/Pages/Article_091026_085517.aspx
- Emmison, M. (2004). The conceptualization and analysis of visual data. In D. Silverman (Ed.), *Qualitative Research: Theory, Method and Practice* (pp. 246-265). London, UK: Sage.
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. Essex, UK: Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analysing discourse: Textual analysis or social research*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Family and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FACSI). (2007). *The National Agenda for Early Childhood*. Canberra, ACT: FACSI.
- Farrell, A. (2005). Globalising early childhood teacher education: A study of student life histories and course experience in teacher education. *International Journal of Early Childhood*, 37(1), 9-18.
- Faubion, J. D. (Ed.). (1994). *Michel Foucault: Aesthetics, method and epistemology. Essential works of Foucault 1954-1984 Volume Two*. New York, NY: The New York Press.
- Fendler, L. (2003). Teacher reflection in a hall of mirrors: Historical influences and political reverberations. *Educational Researcher*, 32(3), 16-25.
- Fenech, M. (2006). The impact of regulatory environments on early childhood professional practice and job satisfaction: A review of conflicting discourses. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, 31(2), 49-57.
- Fenech, M., Robertson, J., Sumsion, J., & Goodfellow, J. (2007). Working by the rules: Early childhood professionals' perceptions of regulatory requirements. *Early Child Development and Care*, 177(1), 93-106.

- Fenech, M., Sumsion, J., & Goodfellow, J. (2006). The regulatory environment in long day care: A 'double edged sword' for early childhood professional practice. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, 31(3), 49-58.
- Fenech, M., Sumsion, J., & Shepherd, W. (2010). Promoting early childhood teacher professionalism in the Australian context: The place of resistance. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 11(1), 89-105.
- Fleer, M. (Ed.). (1995). *DAP centrism : Challenging developmentally appropriate practice*. Watson, ACT: AECA.
- Fleet, A., Patterson, C., & Robertson, J. (Eds.). (2006). *Insights: Behind early childhood pedagogical documentation*. Castle Hill, NSW: Pademelon Press.
- Florence, M. (1994). Foucault. In J. D. Faubion (Ed.), *Michel Foucault: Aesthetics, method and epistemology. Essential works of Foucault 1954-1984 Volume Two* (pp. 459-463). New York, NY: The New Press.
- Flores, M. A., & Day, C. (2006). Contexts which shape and reshape new teachers' identities: A multi-perspective study. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 22(2), 219-232.
- Foucault, M. (1971). Orders of discourse. *Social Science Information*, 10(7), 7-30.
- Foucault, M. (1972/1989). *The archaeology of knowledge* (A.M. Sheridan Smith Trans.). London, UK: Routledge.
- Foucault, M. (1974/1994). 'Prisons et asiles dans le mécanisme du pouvoir'. In *Dits et Ecrits vol. 11*. Paris: Gallimard, pp. 523-524. (Passage trans Clare O'Farrell). Retrieved from <http://www.michel-foucault.com/quote/2004q.html>
- Foucault, M. (1980a). Truth and power. In C. Gordon (Ed.), *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings 1972-1977 Michel Foucault* (pp. 109-133). Brighton, UK: Harvester.
- Foucault, M. (1980b). Two lectures. In C. Gordon (Ed.), *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings 1972-1977* (pp. 78-108). New York, NY: Pantheon Books.
- Foucault, M. (1981). The order of discourse. In R. Young (Ed.), *Untying the text: A post-structuralist reader* (pp. 48-78). London, UK: Routledge and Kegan.
- Foucault, M. (1982). The subject and power. In H. Dreyfus & P. Rabinow (Eds.), *Michel Foucault: beyond structuralism and hermeneutics*. Chicago, CI: University of Chicago Press.
- Foucault, M. (1984a). Nietzsche, genealogy, history. In P. Rabinow (Ed.), *The Foucault reader* (pp. 76-100). Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (1984b). Truth and power. In P. Rabinow (Ed.), *The Foucault reader* (pp. 51-75). Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin.

- Foucault, M. (1988a). Michel Foucault: Politics, philosophy, culture: Interviews and other writings. In L. Kritzman (Ed.). London, UK: Routledge.
- Foucault, M. (1988b). Technologies of the self. In L. H. Martin, H. Gutman & P. Hutton (Eds.), *Technologies of the self: A seminar with Michel Foucault* (pp. 16–49.). Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts Press.
- Foucault, M. (1990a). *The will to knowledge: The history of sexuality Volume 1*. Middlesex, UK: Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (1990b). *The use of pleasure: The history of sexuality Volume 2*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- Foucault, M. (1991). Politics and the study of discourse. In G. Burchell, C. Gordon & P. Miller (Eds.), *The Foucault effect* (pp. 53-72). London, UK: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Foucault, M. (1994). An interview with Michel Foucault. In J. D. Faubion (Ed.), *Power* (pp. 239-297). New York, NY: New York Press.
- Foucault, M. (1995). *Discipline and Punish: The birth of the prison*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- Foucault, M. (2002). *The order of things: An archaeology of the human sciences*. London, UK: Routledge Classics.
- Fraser, N. (1989). *Unruly practices: Power, discourse and gender in contemporary social theory*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Freeman, M., deMarrais, K., Preissle, J., Roulston, K., & St. Pierre, E. A. (2007). Standards of evidence in qualitative research: An incitement to discourse. *Educational Researcher*, 36(1), 25-32.
- Froebel, F. (1895). *The education of man*. New York, NY: Appleton.
- Fulcher, G. (1989). *Disabling policies? A comparative approach to education policy and disability*. London, UK: Falmer Press.
- Fuller, B. (2007). *Standardized childhood: The political and cultural struggle over early education*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Gahan, D., Halliwell, G., Moss, M., & Sherwood, D. (2011). *Graduates remember: Living and learning at the Brisbane Kindergarten Teachers College 1911-1981*. Brisbane, QLD: QUT Alumni.
- Gandini, L., & Pope Edwards, C. (Eds.). (2001). *Bambini: The Italian approach to infant toddler care*. Williston, VT: Teacher's College Press.
- Gardner, H. (1983). *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences*. London, UK: Heinemen.

- Gardner, H. (1993). *Multiple intelligences: The theory in practice*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Geertz, C. (1988). *Works and lives: The anthropologist as author*. Cambridge, UK: Polity
- Genishi, C., & Haas Dyson, A. (2012). Racing to the top: Who's accounting for the children. *Bank Street College of Education Occasional Papers* 27. Retrieved from <http://bankstreet.edu/occasionalpapers/>
- Glesne, C. (2006). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction* (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education.
- Goldfinch, S., & Hart, P. (2003). Leadership and Institutional Reform: Engineering Macroeconomic Policy Change in Australia. *Governance*, 16, 235–270.
- Goodfellow, J. (2003). Practical wisdom in professional practice: The person in the process. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 26(3), 48-63.
- Gottlieb, E. E. (1989). The discursive construction of knowledge: The case of radical education discourse. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 2(2), 131-144.
- Graham, L. (2005, Nov-Dec). *Discourse analysis and the critical use of Foucault*. Paper presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education Annual Conference, Sydney.
- Graham, L. (2007). *Schooling attention deficit hyperactivity disorders*. Doctoral dissertation published as manuscripts, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane.
- Graham, L. J. (2012). The product of text and 'other' statements. In D. R. Cole & L. J. Graham (Eds.), *The power in/of language* (pp. 112-123). West-Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Grieshaber, S. (2000). Regulating the early childhood field. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, 25(2), 1-6.
- Grieshaber, S. (2001). Equity issues in research design. In G. MacNaughton, S. Rolfe & I. Siraj-Blatchford (Eds.), *Doing early childhood research: International perspectives on theory and practice* (pp. 136-146). Crows Nest, NSW: Allen and Unwin.
- Grieshaber, S. (2008). Interrupting stereotypes: Teaching and the education of young children. *Early Education and Development*, 19(3), 505-518.
- Grieshaber, S., & Cannella, G. S. (2001a). From identity to identities: Increasing possibilities in early childhood education. In S. Grieshaber & G. S. Cannella (Eds.), *Embracing Identities in Early Childhood Education: Diversity and possibilities* (pp. 3-22). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

- Grieshaber, S., & Cannella, G. S. (2001b). Identities and possibilities. In S. Grieshaber & G. S. Cannella (Eds.), *Embracing Identities in Early Childhood Education: Diversity and possibilities* (pp. 173-180). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Grieshaber, S., & McArdle, F. (2010). *The trouble with play*. Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press.
- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 191-215). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Halliday, M. A. (1995). *Discourse in society: Systemic functional perspectives*. Norwood, N.J.: Ablex.
- Hammond, J., & Gibbons, P. (2005). What is scaffolding? In A. Burns & H. de Silva Joyce (Eds.), *Teachers' voices 8: Explicitly supporting reading and writing in the classroom* (pp. 8-15). Sydney, NSW: National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research, Macquarie University.
- Haraway, D. (1988). Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective. *Feminist studies*, 14(3), 575-599.
- Haraway, D. (1991). *Simians, cyborgs and women: The reinvention of nature*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Haraway, D. (2004). *The Haraway reader*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hargreaves, A. (2000). Four ages of professionalism and professional learning. *Teachers and Teaching: History and Practice*, 6(2), 151-182.
- Harms, T., Cryer, D., & Clifford, R. M. (1998). *Early childhood environment rating scale* (Revised ed.). New York, NY: Teacher's College Press.
- Harms, T., Cryer, D., & Clifford, R. M. (2006). *Infant/toddler environment rating scale* (Revised ed.). New York, NY: Teacher's College Press.
- Hatch, J. A. (1999). What preservice teachers can learn from studies of teachers' work. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 15(3), 229-242.
- Hatch, J. A. (2002). *Doing qualitative research in education settings*. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press.
- Hatcher, C. (1997). *Making the enterprising manager in Australia: A genealogy*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Queensland University of Technology.
- Hatcher, C. (2000). Practices of the heart: The art of being a good listener. In C. O'Farrell, D. Meadmore, E. McWilliam & C. Symns (Eds.), *Taught bodies* (pp. 121-135). New York, NY: Peter Lang.

- Hatcher, C. (2003). Refashioning a passionate manager: Gender at work. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 10(4), 391-412.
- Hatcher, C. (2008). Becoming a successful corporate character and the role of emotional management. In S. Fineman (Ed.), *The emotional organization: Passion and power* (pp. 153-166). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Heckman, J. (2000). Policies to foster human capital. *Research in Economics*, 54(1), 3-56.
- Heckman, J. (2004). Invest in the very young. *Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development*. Retrieved from <http://www.child-encyclopedia.com/pages/PDF/HeckmanANGxp.pdf>
- Heckman, J. (2006). The economics of investing in early childhood. *NIFTeY (National Investment for the Early Years) Conference*. Retrieved from <http://www.niftey.cyh.com/webpages/conferences/conferenceframe.htm>
- Henriques, J., Hollway, W., Urwin, C., Venn, C., & Walkerdine, V. (1984). *Changing the subject: Psychology, social regulation and subjectivity*. London: Methuen.
- Holloway, W. (1984). Gender difference and the production of subjectivity. In J. Henriques, W. Hollway, C. Urwin, C. Benn & V. Walkerdine (Eds.), *Changing the subject: Psychology, social regulation and subjectivity* (pp. 227-263). London, UK: Methuen.
- Holstein, J. A., & Gubrium, J. F. (2005). Interpretive practice and social action. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 483-505). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hong, J. Y. (2010). Pre-service and beginning teachers' professional identity and its relation to dropping out of the profession. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26(8), 1530-1543.
- Horowitz, F. D., Darling-Hammond, L., Bransford, J., with Comer, J., Rosebrock, K., Austin, K., et al. (2009). Educating teachers for developmentally appropriate practice. In L. Darling-Hammond & J. Bransford (Eds.), *Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should learn and be able to do* (pp. 88-125). San Francisco CA: Jossey-Base A Wiley Imprint.
- Hughes, P., & MacNaughton, G. (1999). Who's the expert: Reconceptualising parent-staff relations in early education. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, 24(4), 27-32.
- Hughes, P., & MacNaughton, G. (2000). Consensus, dissensus or community: The politics of parent involvement in early childhood education. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 1(3), 241-258.
- Independent Education Union ACT/NSW. (2012). Teachers are teachers: Fund equal pay for early childhood teachers. Retrieved from <http://teachersareteachers.org.au/>

- Ishimine, K., Tayler, C., & Thorpe, K. (2009). Accounting for quality in Australian childcare: A dilemma for policymakers. *Journal of Education Policy*, 24(6), 717-732. doi:10.1080/02680930903207695
- James, A., Jenks, C., & Prout, J. (1998). *Theorizing childhood*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press in association with Blackwell.
- James, H. L., & Willis, E. (2001). The professionalisation of midwifery through education or politics? *Australian Journal of Midwifery*, 14(4), 27-30.
- Kendall, S. (2006). Positioning the female voice within work and family. In J. Butler (Ed.), *Speaking out: The female voice in public contexts* (pp. 179-197). Hampshire, UK: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Kendall, G., & Wickham, G. (1999). *Using Foucault's methods*. London, UK: Sage.
- Khalfa, J. (Ed.). (2006). *History of madness. Michel Foucault (Trans. Murphy & Khalfa, J.)*. London, UK: Routledge
- Killen, R. (2000). *Outcomes-based education: Principles and possibilities*. Unpublished manuscript. University of Newcastle, Faculty of Education.
- Kramer, R. (1988). *Maria Montessori: A biography*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Krieg, S. (2008). *Competing professional identities in contemporary early childhood teacher education*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of South Australia, Adelaide.
- Krieg, S. (2010). The professional knowledge that counts in Australian contemporary early childhood teacher education. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 11(2), 144-155. doi.org/10.2304/ciec.2010.11.2.144
- Laevers, F. (Ed.). (1994). *Defining and assessing quality in early childhood education*. Brussels, Belgium: Leuven Press.
- Lally, J. R. (1998). Brain research, infant learning, and child care curriculum. *Child Information Exchange*, 5(98), 46-48.
- Lally, J. R. (2010). School readiness begins in infancy: Social interactions during the first two years of life provide the foundation of learning. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 92(3), 17-21. Retrieved from www.kappanmagazine.org
- Langford, R. (2005). *Discourses of the good early childhood educator in professional training: Reproducing marginality or working toward social change*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Toronto, Canada.
- Langford, R. (2007). Who is a good early childhood educator? A critical study of differences within a universal professional identity in early childhood education preparation programs. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*, 28(4), 333-352.

- Langford, R. (2008). Making a difference in the lives of young children: A critical analysis of a pedagogical discourse for motivating young women to become early childhood educators. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 31(1), 78-101.
- Lankshear, C., & Knobel, M. (2004). *A handbook for teacher research: From design to implementation*. Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press.
- Lasky, S. (2005). A sociological approach to understanding teacher identity, agency and professional vulnerability in a context of secondary school reform. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 21(8), 899-916.
- Lather, P. (2000). Against empathy, voice and authenticity. *Women, Gender and Research* (Special Issue "Transgressive Methodology"), 4, 16-25.
- Lather, P. (2001). *Getting smart: Feminist research and pedagogy with/in the postmodern* New York, NY: Routledge.
- Lather, P. (2006). Foucauldian scientificity: Rethinking the nexus of qualitative research and educational policy analysis. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 19(6), 783-791.
- Lather, P. (2008). (Post) feminist methodology. In N. K. Denzin & M. D. Giardina (Eds.), *Qualitative inquiry and the politics of evidence* (pp. 182-194). Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
- Lather, P., & Moss, P. A. (2005). Introduction: Implications of the scientific research in education report for qualitative inquiry. *Teachers College Record*, 107(1), 1-3.
- Lee, A., & McWilliam, E. (2009). What game are we in? Living with academic development. *International Journal for Academic Development*, 13(1), 67-77.
- Liberal Party. (2012). Our beliefs- Liberal Party of Australia. Retrieved from <http://www.liberal.org.au/node/19889>
- Lubeck, S. (1998a). Is DAP for everyone? A response. *Childhood Education*, 74(5), 299-301.
- Lubeck, S. (1998b). Is developmentally practice for everyone? *Childhood Education*, 74(5), 283-292.
- Luke, A. (1995-96). Text and discourse in education: An introduction to critical discourse analysis. *Review of Research in Education*, 21, 3-41.
- Luke, A. (2011). Generalizing across borders: Policy and limits of educational science. *Educational Researcher*, 40(8), 367-377.
- Luke, A., & McArdle, F. (2009). A model for research-based state professional development policy. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 37(3), 231-251.

- Luke, A. & Gore, J. (Eds.). (1992). *Feminisms and critical pedagogy*. New York: Routledge
- MacNaughton, G. (2003). *Shaping early childhood: Learners, curriculum and contexts*. Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press.
- MacNaughton, G. (2004a). Children, staff and parents: Building respectful relationships in New Zealand and Australian early childhood contexts. The Australian context. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, 29(1), 1-7.
- MacNaughton, G. (2004b). The politics of logic in early childhood research: A case of the brain, hard facts, trees and rhizomes. *The Australian Educational Researcher*, 31(3), 87-104.
- MacNaughton, G. (2005). *Doing Foucault in early childhood studies: Applying poststructural ideas*. Oxon, UK: Routledge.
- MacNaughton, G., & Rolfe, S. A. (2001). The research process. In G. MacNaughton, S. A. Rolfe & I. Siraj-Blatchford (Eds.), *Doing early childhood research: International perspectives on theory and practice* (pp. 12-30). Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin.
- Mahony, K. (2003). The politics of professionalisation: Some implications for the occupation of ambulance paramedics in Australia. *Emergency Primary Health Care*, 1, 3-4.
- Malaguzzi, L. (1998). History, ideas and basic philosophy: An interview with Lella Gandini. In C. Edwards, L. Gandini & G. Forman (Eds.), *The Hundred Languages of Children: the Reggio Emilia approach-advanced reflections*. Greenwich: Ablex Publishing Corporation.
- Manne, A. (2005). *Motherhood: How should we care for children?* Sydney, NSW: Allen & Unwin.
- Martinez, D. M., Desiderio, M. F., & Papakonstantinou, A. (2010). Teaching: A job or a profession? The perceptions of educators. *The Educational Forum*, 74(4), 289-296.
- Mashburn, A. J., Pianta, R. C., Hamre, B. K., Downer, J. T., Barbarian, O., Bryant, D., et al. (2008). Measures of classroom quality in prekindergarten and children's development of academic, language and social skills. *Child Development*, 79(3), 732-749.
- Mason, J. (1996). *Qualitative researching*. London, UK: Sage.
- McArdle, F. (2001a). *Art in early childhood. The discourse of proper teaching*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Qld.
- McArdle, F. (2001b). A method of ironic research. In P. Singh & E. McWilliam (Eds.), *Designing educational research: Theories, methods and practice* (pp. 285-300). Flaxton, QLD: Post Pressed.

- McArdle, F. (2010). Preparing quality teachers: Making learning visible. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 35(8), 60-78.
- McArdle, F., & McWilliam, E. (2005). From balance to blasphemy: Shifting metaphors for researching early childhood education. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 18(3), 323 - 336.
- McBride, N. (2000). *Mothering matters: Being prepared to care*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Queensland University of Technology.
- McCarthy, C. (1995). The problem with origins; race and the contrapuntal nature of the educational experience. In C. Sleeter & P. McClaren (Eds.), *Multicultural education, critical pedagogy and the politics of difference* (pp. 245-268). New York, NY: State University of New York Press.
- McGillivray, G. (2010). Nannies, nursery nurses and early year professionals: Constructions of professional identity in the early years workforce in England. In C. Dalli & M. Urban (Eds.), *Professionalism in early childhood education and care: International perspectives* (pp. 111-123). London, UK: Routledge.
- McLaren, P. (2003). Critical pedagogy: A look at the major concepts. In A. Darder, M. Baltadano & R. D. Torres (Eds.), *The critical pedagogy reader* (pp. 69-96). New York: Routledge Falmer.
- McNay, L. (1992). *Foucault and feminism: Power, gender and the self*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- McNay, L. (2000). *Gender and agency: Reconfiguring the subject in feminist and social theory*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- McWilliam, E. (1994). *In broken images: Feminist tales for a different teacher education*. New York, NY: Teacher's College Press.
- McWilliam, E. (1999). *Pedagogical pleasures*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- McWilliam, E. (2007). Managing 'nearly reasonable' risk in the contemporary university. *Studies in Higher Education*, 32(3), 311-321.
- McWilliam, E., Hatcher, C., & Meadmore, D. (1999, Nov-Dec). Corporatising the teacher: New professional identities in education. *Australian Association of Research in Education* Retrieved from www.aare.edu.au/99pap/mea99070.htm
- Meadmore, D., Hatcher, C., & McWilliam, E. (2000). Getting tense about genealogy. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 13(5), 463-476.
- Meredyth, D., & Tyler, D. (1993). Introduction. In D. Meredyth & D. Tyler (Eds.), *Child and citizen: Genealogies of schooling and subjectivity* (pp. 1-10). Brisbane, QLD: Institute for Cultural Policy Studies, Faculty of Humanities, Griffith University.

- Millwater, J. (2009). Stepping out into the real world of education: An introduction. In J. Millwater & D. Beutel (Eds.), *Stepping out into the real world of education. Frenchs Forest: Pearson Education Australia*. (pp. 1-19). Frenchs Forest, NSW: Pearson Education Australia.
- Ministerial Council for Education. (2011). *Education and Care Services National Regulations*. Canberra, ACT: Ministerial Council for Education.
- Ministers' Media Centre. (2010a, May). *Doorstop interview- Garran Child Care Centre*: Education, Employment and Workplace Relations portfolio. Retrieved from <http://ministers.deewr.gov.au/gillard/doorstop-interview-garran-child-care-centre>
- Ministers' Media Centre. (2010b). *First national census for the early childhood workforce*. (3 January 2012). Retrieved from <http://ministers.deewr.gov.au/ellis/first-national-census-early-childhood-workforce>
- Mitchell, L. (2008). *Early childhood education services in 2007: Key findings from the NZCER national survey*. Wellington, NZ: New Zealand Council for Educational Research.
- Mitchell, L. (2010). Constructions of childhood in early childhood education policy debate in New Zealand. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 11(4), 328-341.
- Mitchell, L., & Brooking, K. (2007). *First NZCER national survey of early childhood education services, 2003-2004*. Wellington, NZ: New Zealand Council for Educational Research.
- Monighan-Nourrot, P., Scales, B., Van Hoorn, J., & Almay, M. (1987). *Looking at children's play: A bridge between theory and practice*. New York: Teacher's College Press.
- Montessori, M. (1914). *Doctor Montessori's own handbook*. New York, NY: Stokes.
- Moore, T., & Oberklaid, F. (2010). Investing in early childhood education and care: The health and wellbeing case. *Encyclopedia of education* (3rd ed.). Oxford, UK: Elsevier.
- Morgan, D. L. (2004). Focus groups. In S. N. Hesse-Biber & P. Leavy (Eds.), *Approaches to qualitative research* (pp. 203-285). New York, NY: Oxford University.
- Moriarty, V. (2000). Early years educators in Finland and England: Issues of professionalism. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 8(3), 235-242.
- Morrison-Beedy, D., Cote-Arsenault, D., & Feinstein, N. F. (2001). Maximizing results with focus groups: Moderator and analysis issues. *Applied Nursing Research*, 14(1), 48-53.

- Moss, P. (2005). Section I: Theoretical Examinations of Quality: Making the Narrative of Quality Stutter. *Early Education and Development*, 16(4), 405-420. doi: 10.1207/s15566935eed1604_2
- Moss, P. (2006). Structures, understandings and discourses: Possibilities for re-visioning the early childhood worker. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 7(1), 30-41.
- Moss, P. (2010). We cannot continue as we are: The educator in an education for survival. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 11(1), 8-19.
- Moss, P., & Petrie, P. (2002). *From children's services to children's spaces: Public policy, children and childhood*. London, UK: Routledge Falmer.
- Mustard, J. F. (2002). Early childhood development and the brain: The base for health, learning and behaviour. In M.E. Young, (Ed.), *From early childhood development to human development: Investing in our children's future* (pp. 23-62). Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.
- Myers-Briggs Foundation. (n.d.). The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. Retrieved from <http://www.myersbriggs.org/my-mbti-personality-type/mbti-basics/>
- National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC). (2005). *Quality improvement and accreditation system: Quality practices guide*. Surry Hills, NSW: NCAC.
- National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC). (1999). National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans (1999). Retrieved from <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/e35>
- National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD). (1999). Child outcomes when child care center classes meet recommended standards for quality. *American Journal of Public Health*, 89(7), 1072-1077.
- National Scientific Council on the Developing Child. (2007). *The timing and quality of early experiences combine to shape brain architecture: Working paper #5*. Retrieved from www.developingchild.net.
- Nelson, S. (2001). Hairdressing and nursing: Presentation of self and professional formation in colonial Australia. *Collegian*, 8(2), 28-31.
- Neugebauer, B. (1990). Evaluation of director by staff. *Child Care Information Exchange*, 20-21.
- Neugebauer, R. (2011). Qualifications of preschool teachers: A hot issue in our field. *Exchange*, November-December, 23-26.
- New South Wales Government. (2004). *Children and Education Services Supplementary Provisions Regulation 2004*. Sydney, NSW: NSW Government.
- Noddings, N. (1992). *The challenge to care in schools: An alternative approach to education*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

- Novinger, S., & Brien, L. (2003). Beyond 'boring, meaningless shit' in the academy: Early childhood teacher educators under the regulatory gaze. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 4(1), 3-31.
- Oberhuemer, P. (2004, Nov). *Conceptualising the early childhood professional: Policy models and research issues*. Paper presented at the European Early Childhood Research Association Annual Conference, Malta.
- Oberhuemer, P. (2005). Conceptualising the early childhood pedagogue: Policy approaches and issues of professionalism. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 13(1), 5-16.
- O'Farrell, C. (2005). *Michel Foucault*. London, UK: SAGE.
- O'Farrell, C. (2011). *Refracted input*. Retrieved from <http://inputs.wordpress.com/2011/12/17/foucault-truth-language-and-philosophy-2/>
- O'Farrell, C. (n.d.). michel-foucault.com. Retrieved from <http://www.michel-foucault.com/concepts/index.html>
- Office for Children Department of Communities. (2006). *Child care qualifications review consultation paper*. Brisbane, QLD: Queensland Government.
- O'Loughlin, M. (2009). *The subject of childhood*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- O'Loughlin, M. (2010). Occupying the twilight zone as a space of possibility. In M. O'Loughlin & R. T. Johnson (Eds.), *Imagining children otherwise: Theoretical and critical perspectives on childhood subjectivity* (pp. 1-11). New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- O'Loughlin, M., & Johnson, R. T. (Eds.). (2010). *Imagining children otherwise: Theoretical and critical perspectives on childhood subjectivity*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2001). *Starting strong: Early childhood education and care policy*. Paris, France: OECD.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2004). *OECD Country Note: Early childhood education and care policy in the Federal Republic of Germany*. Retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/52/33/2535075.pdf>
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2006). *Starting strong II: Early childhood education and care policy*. Paris, France: OECD.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2012). *Starting Strong III: A quality toolbox for early childhood education and care*. Paris, France: OECD.

- Osgood, J. (2006). Deconstructing professionalism in early childhood education: Resisting the regulatory gaze. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 7(1), 5-14.
- Osgood, J. (2010). Narrative methods in the nursery: (re)- considering claims to give voice through processes of decision making. *Reconceptualizing Educational Research Methodology*, 1(1), 14-28.
- Osgood, J. (2012). *Narratives from the nursery: Negotiating professional identities in early childhood*. Oxon, UK: Routledge.
- Osgood, J., Francis, B., & Archer, L. (2006). Gendered identities and work placement: Why don't boys care. *Journal of Education Policy*, 21(3), 305-321.
- Page, J. (2011). Do mothers want professional carers to love their babies? *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 9(3), 310-323.
- Palmer, H. (1998). *The enneagram: Understanding yourself and the others in your life*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Pendergast, D. (1999). *Re-thinking home economics: From modern to post-modern accounts of pedagogical bodies*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane.
- Penn, H. (2011a). Policy rationales for early childhood services. *International Journal of Child Care and Education Policy*, 5(1), 1-16.
- Penn, H. (2011b). *Quality in early childhood services: An international perspective*. Berkshire, UK: Open University Press.
- Perry, R. (1998). *Play-based preschool curriculum*. Brisbane: Queensland University of Technology.
- Petry, F., & Benoit, C. (2009). Measuring how political parties keep their promises: A positive perspective from political science. *Studies in Public Choice*, 15(2), 65-80.
- Piaget, J. (1955). *The child's construction of reality*. Sydney: Routledge Keenan Hall.
- Pocock, B. (2006). *The labour market ate my babies: Work, children and a sustainable future*. Annandale, NSW: The Federation Press.
- Pocock, B., Skinner, N., & Williams, P. (2012). *Time bomb: Work, rest and play in Australia today*. Sydney, NSW: New South Books.
- Popkewitz, T. S. (1998). *Struggling for the soul: The politics of schooling and the construction of the teacher*. New York, NY: Teachers College.
- Popkewitz, T. S. (2000). The denial of change in educational change: Systems of ideas in the construction of national policy and evaluation. *Educational Researcher*, 29(1), 17-29.

- Press, F. (2006). *What about the kids? Policy directions for improving the experiences of infants and young children in a changing world*. Sydney, NSW: Commission for Children and Young People, Queensland Commission for Children and Young People, and National Investment for the Early Years (NIFTeY).
- Press, F. (2009). Trends and debates in ECEC policy: A literature review canvassing policy developments in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Sweden and the United Kingdom. In D. Brennan (Ed.), *Building an international research collaboration in early childhood education and care: Background materials for a workshop funding by the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY)* (pp. 1-24). Sydney, NSW: Social Policy Research Centre, University of New South Wales.
- Productivity Commission. (2011). *Early Childhood Development Workforce: Productivity Commission Research Report*. Canberra, A.C.T: Australian Government.
- Queensland College of Teachers (QCT). (2006). *Professional standards for Queensland teachers*. Brisbane: Queensland College of Teachers.
- Queensland Government. (2003). *Child Care Regulation 2003*. Retrieved from <http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/CURRENT/C/ChildCareR03.pdf>
- Queensland Government. (2011). Education and Care Services National Law (Queensland) Act 2011.
- Queensland Industrial Relations Commission (QIRC). (2000). *Pay equity enquiry. Queensland Government Submission*. Retrieved from <http://www.dir.qld.gov.au/pdf/ir/payequity.pdf>
- Queensland Industrial Relations Commission (QIRC). (2006). Joint Submission, Liquor Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union, Queensland Branch, Union of Employees and Children's Services Employers Association Queensland Union of Employers and Others.
- Queensland Industrial Relations Commission (QIRC). (2012a). *Children's Services Award: State 2012*. Retrieved from http://www.qirc.qld.gov.au/resources/pdf/awards/c/c0600_ar10.pdf
- Queensland Industrial Relations Commission (QIRC). (2012b). Early Childhood Education Award: State 2012. Retrieved from http://www.qirc.qld.gov.au/resources/pdf/awards/e/e0001_ar10.pdf
- Queensland Industrial Relations Commission. (2012c). *Teachers' Award State- 2012*. Retrieved from http://www.qirc.qld.gov.au/resources/pdf/awards/t/t0110_ar10.pdf
- Queensland University of Technology (QUT). (2011). *Graduate Destinations Survey*. Retrieved from http://www.careersadd.qut.edu.au/graddest/course_report.asp

- Rabe-Kleberg, U. (2006, May). *Beyond the limits of female practice: Rethinking professionalization processes in traditionally female occupations*. Paper presented at the Early Years Seminar Series, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Qld.
- Rabinow, P. (Ed.). (1984). *The Foucault reader*. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin.
- Reid, A. (2009). Is this a revolution? A critical analysis of the Rudd government's national education agenda. *Curriculum Perspectives* 29(3), 1-13.
- Richardson, L. (1997). *Fields of play: Constructing an academic life*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Rinaldi, C. (2006). *In dialogue with Reggio Emilia: listening, researching and learning*. Oxfordshire: Routledge Falmer.
- Robinson, K., & Davies, C. (2008). Docile bodies and heteronormative moral subjects: Constructing the child and sexual knowledge in schooling. *Sexuality & Culture* 12, 221–239.
- Robson, J. (2006). *Teacher professionalism in further and higher education : Challenges to culture and practice*. London New York: Routledge.
- Rodd, J. (2006). *Leadership in early childhood: The pathway to professionalism* (3rd ed.). Sydney: Allen & Unwin.
- Rorty, R. (1989). *Contingency, irony and solidarity*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Rose, N. (1989). *Governing the soul: The shaping of the private self* (2nd ed.). London, UK: Free Association Books.
- Rousseau, J. (1991). *Emilie: Or on education* (A. Bloom, Trans.). Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin. (Original work published 1972).
- Rudd, K., & Macklin, J. (2007a). *Labor's plan for high quality child care*. Canberra, ACT: ALP.
- Rudd, K., & Macklin, J. (2007b). *New directions for early childhood education: Universal access to early learning for 4 year olds*. Canberra, ACT: ALP.
- Rudd, K., & Macklin, J. (2007c, January). *Investing in ECEC – The science, the policy, the cost*. Seminar presented at the Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation, QUT, Brisbane, QLD.
- Rush, E. (2006). *Child care quality in Australia*. Canberra, ACT: The Australia Institute.
- Ryan, S., & Ackerman, D. J. (2005). Using pressure and support to create a qualified workforce. *Education policy analysis archives*, 13(23). Retrieved from <http://epaa.asu.edu/ojs/article/view/128/254>

- Ryan, S., & Grieshaber, S. (2005). Shifting from developmental to postmodern practices in early childhood teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 56(1), 34-45.
- Ryan, S., & Lobman, C. (2007). Potential of focus groups to inform early childhood policy and practice. In J. A. Hatch (Ed.), *Early childhood qualitative research* (pp. 63-74). New York, NY: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group.
- Ryan, S., Ochsner, M., & Genishi, C. (2001). Miss Nelson is missing: Teacher sightings in research on teaching. In S. Grieshaber & G. S. Cannella (Eds.), *Embracing identities in early childhood education: Diversity and possibilities* (pp. 45-49). New York: Teacher's College Press.
- Sachs, J. (2001). Teacher professional identity: Competing discourses, competing outcomes. *Journal of Educational Policy*, 16(2), 149-161.
- Sachs, J. (2003). *The activist teaching profession*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.
- Schein, E. (2005). Organizational culture. In W. L. French, C. H. Bell & R. A. Zawacki (Eds.), *Organizational Development and Transformation: Managing effective change* (6th ed., pp. 125-139). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Schweinhart, L. J., Montie, J., Xiang, Z., Barnett, W. S., Belfield, C. R., & Nores, M. (2005). *Lifetime effects: The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study through age 40*. Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Press.
- Shonkoff, J. P., & Phillips, D. A. (Eds.). (2000). *From neurons to neighbourhoods: The science of early childhood development*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.
- Sidoti, C. (2008, Oct). *Advocacy and leadership and in early childhood services: A personal reflection on promoting children's rights*. Paper presented at the Early Childhood Australia Biennial Conference, Canberra, ACT.
- Silverman, D. (2001). *Interpreting qualitative data* (2nd ed.). London, UK: Sage Publications.
- Silverman, D. (2009). *Doing qualitative research* (3rd ed.). London, UK: Sage.
- Sims, M. (2003). Are we asking the right question when we ask: 'Is child care bad for children?'. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, 30(2), 29-39.
- Sims, M., Guilfoyle, A., & Parry, T. S. (2006). Children's cortisol levels and quality of child care provision. *Child: Care, Health and Development*, 32(4), 453-466.
- Siraj-Blatchford, I., & Sylva, K. (2004). Researching pedagogy in English preschools. *British Educational Research Journal*, 30(5), 713-730.
- Social Research Centre DEEWR. (2011). *2010 National Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Census*. Melbourne, Vic: The Social Research Centre.

- Sondergaard, D. M. (2002). Poststructuralist approaches to empirical analysis. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 15(2), 187-204.
- Sondergaard, D. M. (2005). Making sense of gender, age, power and disciplinary position: Intersecting discourses in the academy. *Feminism and Psychology*, 15(2), 189-208.
- Spady, W. G. (1994). *Outcome-Based Education: Critical Issues and Answers*. Arlington, VA: American Association of School Administrators.
- St. Pierre, E. A. (2000). Postructural feminism in education: An overview. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 13(5), 477-515.
- St. Pierre, E. (2002). Troubling the categories of qualitative inquiry. In S. B. Merriam (Ed.), *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis* (pp. 417-419). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC). (2012). *Early years workforce strategy: The early childhood education and care workforce strategy for Australia*. Canberra, A.C.T: SCSEEC.
- Stonehouse, A. (1994). *Not just nice ladies: A book of readings on early childhood care and education*. Sydney, NSW: Pademelon Press.
- Summers, A. (1998). The lost voice of midwifery: Midwives, nurses and the Nurses Registration Act of South Australia. *Collegian*, 5(3), 16-22.
- Sumsion, J. (2002a). Becoming, being, unbecoming an early childhood educator: A phenomenological case study of teacher attrition. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 18(7), 869-885.
- Sumsion, J. (2002b). Revisiting the challenge of staff recruitment and retention in children's services. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, 27(1), 8-23.
- Sumsion, J. (2003). 'Bad days don't kill you; they just make you stronger': A case study of an early childhood educator's resilience. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 11(2), 141-154.
- Sumsion, J. (2005). Putting postmodern theories into practice in early childhood teacher education. In S. Ryan & S. Grieshaber (Eds.), *Practical transformations and transformational practices: Globalization, postmodernism and early childhood education* (Vol. 14, pp. 193-216). Amsterdam, Netherlands: Elsevier.
- Sumsion, J. (2006). From Whitlam to economic rationalism and beyond: A conceptual framework for political activism in children's services. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, 31(1), 1-9.
- Sumsion, J., & Goodfellow, J. (2012). 'Looking and listening-in': A methodological approach to generating insights into infants' experiences of early childhood education and care settings. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 20(3), 313-327. doi:10.1080/1350293X.2012.704758

- Sumsion, J., & Patterson, C. (2004). The emergence of community in a preservice teacher education program. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 20(6), 621-635.
- Sutherland, G. (2001). Examinations and the construction of professional identity: A case study of England 1800-1950. *Assessment in Education*, 8(1), 51-64.
- Sylva, K., Melhuis, E., Sammons, P., Siraj-Blatchford, I., & Taggart, B. (2004). *The effective provision of preschool education project (EPPE): Final report*. London, UK: DfES.
- Tayler, C. (2011). Changing policy, changing culture: Steps toward early learning quality improvement in Australia. *International Journal of Early Childhood*, 43(3), 211-225.
- Tayler, C., Wills, M., Hayden, J., & Wilson, C. (2006). *A review of the approach to setting national standards and assuring the quality of care in Australian child care services*. Brisbane, QLD: Queensland University of Technology.
- Taylor, S. (2004). Researching educational policy and change in 'new times': using critical discourse analysis. *Journal of Education Policy*, 19(4), 433-451.
- The Economist. (2012). Pay to stay home. *The Economist*. Retrieved from <http://www.economist.com/node/21554245/print>
- Theobald, M. A., Danby, S. J., & Ailwood, J. (2011). Child participation in the early years: Challenges for education. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 36(3), 19-26.
- Thomas, L. (2009). *Certainties and uncertainties: Ethics and professional identities of early childhood educators*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, QLD.
- Thorpe, K., Boyd, W., Ailwood, J., & Brownlee, J. (2011). Who wants to work in child care? Preservice early childhood teachers consideration of work in the childcare sector. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 36(1), 85-94.
- Timostsuk, I., & Ugaste, A. (2010). Student teachers' professional identity. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26(8), 1563-1570.
- Timperley, H., & Alton-Lee, A. (2008). Reframing teacher professional learning: An alternative policy approach to strengthening valued outcomes for diverse learners. *Review of Research in Education*, 32(1), 328-369. doi:10.3102/0091732X07308968
- Tobias, R. (2003). Continuing professional education and professionalization: Travelling without a map or compass. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 22(5), 445-456.
- Tobin, J. (2005). Quality in early childhood education: An anthropologist's perspective. *Early Education and Development*, 16(4), 421-434. doi:10.1207/s15566935eed1604_3

- Tobin, J., Hsueh, Y., & Karasawa, M. (2009). *Preschool in Three Cultures Revisited: China, Japan and the United States*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Tyler, D. (1986). Post-modern ethnography: From document of the occult to occult document. In J. Clifford & G. E. Marcus (Eds.), *Writing culture* (pp. 122-140). Berkley, CA: University of California.
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (2006). *Strong foundations: Early childhood care and education*. Paris, France: UNESCO.
- University Human Research Ethics Committee. (2004). *University Human Research Ethics Manual*. Brisbane, QLD: QUT.
- Urban, M. (2004). *Quality, autonomy and the profession: Questions of quality*. Dublin, Ireland: Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education.
- Vajda, M. (2005a, Sept). *Do I really have to do a childcare prac?* Paper presented at the Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Conference, Brisbane, QLD.
- Vajda, M. (2005b, Jan). *Student teachers' perceptions of a childcare work experience*. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of Australian Research in Early Childhood Education, Melbourne, VIC.
- Viruru, R. (2005). Postcolonial theory and the practice of teacher education. In S. Ryan & S. Grieshaber (Eds.), *Practical transformations and transformational practices: Globalization, postmodernism and early childhood education* (Vol. 14, pp. 139-160). Amsterdam, Netherlands: Elsevier.
- Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society*. (E. Hanfmann & G. Vakar, Trans.) Cambridge, UK: Harvard University Press.
- Walkerdine, V. (1990). *Schoolgirl fictions*. London, UK: Verso.
- Walkerdine, V. (1992). Progressive pedagogy and political struggle. In C. Luke & J. Gore (Eds.), *Feminisms and critical pedagogy* (pp. 15-24). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Walkerdine, V. (1993). Beyond developmentalism. *Theory and Psychology*, 3(4), 451-469.
- Walsh, G., & Gardner, J. (2005). Assessing quality of early learning environments. *Early Childhood Research and Practice*. Retrieved from <http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v7n1/walsh.html>
- Walsh, K. A. (2007, November 25). Rudd triumphs as Howard cast aside. *Sydney Morning Herald*. Retrieved from <http://www.smh.com.au/news/federal-election-2007-news/rudd-triumphs-as-howard-cast-aside/2007/11/24/1195753380642.html>

- Waniganayake, M. (2001). Transient times and nurturing the pride of the profession. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, 26(1), 1-5.
- Wannan, L. (2005). A cautionary tale from Australia. *Canadian Council of Social Development Briefing Session Note*. Retrieved from <http://www.ccsd.ca/pr/2005/wannan.htm>
- Warren, A. (2013). 'I wondered does this make me any less of a teacher...?': Early childhood teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand claimed by and claiming authority within a dominant discourse. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*. doi:10.1177/1476718x12463914
- Watamura, S. E., Kryzer, E. M., & Robertson, S. S. (2009). Cortisol patterns at home and child care: Afternoon differences and evening recovery in children attending very high quality full-day center-based child care. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 30(4), 475-485.
- Watson, C. (2006a). Narratives of practice and the construction of teacher identity. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and practice*, 12(5), 509-526.
- Watson, L. (2006b). *Pathways to a profession: Education and training in early childhood education and care*. Canberra, A.C.T: Department of Education, Science and Training.
- Watson, L., & Axford, B. (2008). *Characteristics and delivery of early childhood education degrees in Australia: Part A Final Report October 2008*. Canberra, A.C.T: Faculty of Education The University of Canberra.
- Webb, T. (2009). *Teacher assemblage*. Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers.
- Weber, E. (1984). *Ideas influencing early childhood education: A theoretical analysis*. New York, NY: Teacher's College Press.
- Weedon, C. (1997). *Feminist practice and poststructuralist theory* (2nd ed.). Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Weedon, C. (1999). *Feminism, theory and the politics of difference*. Massachusetts, MA: Blackwell.
- White, L. A. (2002). Ideas and the welfare state: Explaining child care policy development in Canada and the United States. *Comparative Political Studies*, 35(6), 713-743.
- Whitebook, M. (2012). No single ingredient. Paper presented at the *T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® and Child Care WAGE\$® National Symposium Keynote Address*. Greensboro, North Carolina.
- Whitebook, M., & Ryan, S. (2011). Degrees in context: Asking the right questions about preparing skilled and effective teachers of young children. *Preschool Policy Brief National Institute for Early Education Research with Center for the Study of Child Care Employment*, April(22), 1-16.

- Whitebook, M., & Sakai, L. (2003). Turnover begets turnover: An examination of job and occupational instability among child care center staff. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 18(3), 273-293.
- Whitehouse, G. (2011). Recent trends in pay equity: Beyond the aggregate statistics. *Journal of Industrial Relations* 43(1), 66-78.
- Winslett, G. (2010). *Resistance: Re-imagining innovation in higher education teaching and learning*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, QLD.
- Wise, A. E. (2005). Establishing teaching as a profession: The essential role of professional accreditation. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 56(4), 318-331.
- Woman's Day. (2012). Minds now open. Goodstart early learning. (print advertisement). *Woman's Day*. Sydney: New Ltd. January 30 p. 7.
- Wong, S. (2006). *Early childhood education and care in New South Wales*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Macquarie University, Sydney, NSW.
- Wong, S. (2007). Looking back and loving forward: Historicising the social construction of early childhood education and care as national work. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 8(2), 144-156.
- World Bank. (2002). *Why invest in ECD?* Retrieved from <http://www.worldbank.org/chUdren/whyinvest/>.
- Yinger, R. J. (2005). A public politics for a public profession. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 56(3), 285-290.

Appendices

Appendix A: Criteria for Focus Groups

Appendix B: Course Summary Sheet

Appendix C: Focus Group Questions

Appendix D: Schedule of Focus Group Meetings

Appendix E: Focus Group Participants

Appendix F: Start List of Constructs

Appendix G: Preliminary Coding for Focus Group Data Analysis

Appendix H: Example of Focus Group Data Analysis

Appendix I: Extract of Transcript from Focus Group 3

Appendix J: Participant Information and Consent Form

Appendix K: Notification of Approval Ethical Clearance

Appendix A

Criteria for Focus Groups

Groups to include members that fulfil one or more of the following criteria:

- experience in child care as a child
- experience in child care as a staff member
- experience in child care as a parent
- no experience in child care
- feel negative about child care (based on personal experience or what person has read)
- feel positive about child care (based on personal experience or what person has read).

Appendix B

Course Summary Sheet

BACHELOR OF EDUCATION (EARLY CHILDHOOD) (ED92) COURSE STRUCTURE FOR 2005 ENTRY (For appropriate course progression for year entry, refer to Pages 3 & 4.)

	YEAR 1		YEAR 2		YEAR 3		YEAR 4		TOTAL
	Semester 1	Semester 2	Semester 1	Semester 2	Semester 1	Semester 2	Semester 1	Semester 2	
PROFESSIONAL, FIELD and CURRICULUM STUDIES	EDB006 Learning Networks (12)	EDB007 Culture Studies: Indigenous Education (12)	EAB004 Development & Learning in Early Childhood 2 (12)	EDB003 Teaching & Learning Studies 3: Practicing Education (12)	EAB005 Inclusion in Early Childhood Settings	EAB028 EC Mathematics Education 2: Four to 8 Years (12) (Refer * P4)	EAB026 EC Community Arts Project (12)	EDB005 Teaching and Learning Studies 5: Professional Work of Teachers (12)	300
	EDB001 Teaching & Learning Studies 1: Teaching in New Times (12) [Includes 10 days field research]	EAB003 Development & Learning in Early Childhood 1 (12) [Includes 5 days field studies]	EDB011 EC Field Studies 1: Development and Learning in the Field [Before school settings] [20days] (12) #	EDB012 EC Field Studies 2: Practising Education in the Field [Primary setting] [20 days] (12) #	EDB013 Field Studies 3: Diversity & Inclusivity [Before school settings] [20 days] (12) #	EAB010 EC Language & Literacies and Communication 3 (12)		EDB014 EC Field Studies 4: Professional Work of Teachers: Induction into the Field [Choice of setting] [20 days] (12) #	
	EAB008 EC Language & Literacies & Communication 1 (12)	EAB011 EC Curriculum: Arts 1 (12)	EAB013 EC Society, Environment and Health Education (12) EAB027 EC Mathematics Education 1: Birth to Six Years (12) (Refer * Page 4)	EAB015 EC Science and Information and Communication Technologies Education (12) EAB009 EC Language & Literacies and Communication 2 (12)	EAB012 EC Curriculum: Arts 2 (12) EAB016 Research in Early Childhood Education (12)		EAB006 Leadership and Management in EC Services (12)	EAB017 Integrated EC Curriculum (12)	
FOUNDATION AND PATHWAY STUDIES	EAB001 EC Foundations 1: Historical & Comparative Perspectives of Early Childhood Education (12)	EAB002 EC Foundations 2: Families & Childhoods in Early Childhood Education & Care (12) [Includes 5 days field studies]			(Commencement of optional Research Pathway for students with a GPA of 5.5 or above. Refer to page 4 for details)	Pathway 1 (12) Pathway 2 (12)	Pathway 3 (12) Pathway 4 (12)		84
TOTAL	48	48	48	48	48	48	48	48	384

ED92

29 June 2005

CRICOS No. 00213J

3

Appendix C

Focus Group Questions

Purpose of questions is to identify some of the discourses that shape child care and professional identities.

Section A: Child care

- What is child care for?
- What is child care like?
- Has your Education course influenced your thinking about child care?
How?

Section B: Professional identities

- What is your image of people who work in child care?
- What experiences have you had in child care?
- What do you see as important qualities of people who work in child care?
- Are these qualities ones that you think reflect community images and thinking about child care?
- Would you like to become involved in child care? Why or why not?

Appendix D

Schedule of Focus Group Meetings

Semester 1 2007

Group 1	Wednesday 28 February 2007	10:30am–11:30am
Group 2	Friday 2 March 2007	8.30am–9.30am
Group 3	Friday 2 March 2007	10.30am–11.30am
Group 4	Friday 2 March 2007	12.30pm–1.30pm

Appendix E

Focus Group Participants

Focus group one	Focus group two	Focus group three	Focus group four
Lisa Female 1 Non-school leaver	Kath Female 1 School leaver	Ruth Female 1 Non-school leaver	Jill Female 1 Non-school leaver
Melissa Female 2 School leaver	Meg Female 2 School leaver	Beth Female 2 School leaver	Rian Female 2 Non-school leaver
Rory Female 3 School leaver	Maeve Female 3 School leaver	Claire Female 3 Non-school leaver	Nicola Female 3 Non-school leaver
Margie Female 4 Non-school leaver	Kathy Female 4 School leaver	Leith Female 4 School leaver	Tegan Female 4 Non-school leaver
Amy Female 5 School leaver	Peta Female 5 School leaver		Ben Male Non-school leaver

Appendix F

Start List of Constructs

Qualifications

Working conditions

Financial/economics

Images and views of children

Child care

Child development

Play

Brain research

Advocacy

Rights

Quality



























Maternalism

Outcomes based education

(Ailwood, 2003a; Ailwood, 2008b; Bruner, 1971; James, et al., 1998; Lally, 1998; Malaguzzi, 1998; McWilliam, Hatcher, & Meadmore, 1999; Mustard, 2002; OECD, 2006; Osgood, 2006; Rinaldi, 2006; Ryan & Ackerman, 2005; Spady, 1994; Sumsion, 2003, 2006; Watson, 2006b; Whitebook & Sakai, 2003)

Appendix G
















Preliminary Coding for Focus Group Data Analysis

October - November 2009 (DISCOURSE/CONSTRUCT)		"Producing and Maintaining Professional "TALK AS TEXT"	
Brain research (DIP)		development	
Early intervention/disadv.	SIGN HERE 		
Childcare for working parents			
Babysitting		play	
"Preparing" for school		status	
Governance/reg./accred.			
Quality	SIGN HERE 	parents	
Economy/productivity			
Outcomes based education	X		
Childcare as bad		males/female in cc	
Private/public	SIGN & RETURN 		
Leadership management	*		
Corporate			
Maternalism			
Advocacy a right	SIGN HERE 		
Professional	SIGN & DATE 		
Child care worker			
Financial / pay			
Working conditions			
Qualifications			
Critical incident			
Silence			

Appendix H

Example of Focus Group Data Analysis


group_4_megan_gibson.doc
Page 2 of 40

19		ground for children and that really grates on me, and I find that	
20		some parents don't prioritise their things and use the childcare for	
21		a dumping ground.	
22		I also agree with Jodi in the respect that I think it's great for social,	
23		like to build children's social skills. But I also, my personal view, it	
24		should be a certain age as well. I don't think it's an area where I	
25		would put my six-week-old child and hand them over to a... I don't	
26		know, I guess I'm a bit negative like that in respect of an	
27		unqualified... A lot of, from my personal exposure, a lot of	
28		unqualified people. I mean, they're obviously qualified but there's	
29		not been need to be qualified to work in a centre so some of them	
30		are just coming out of school and you're handing over a young	
31		child to a 17-year-old girl that has no idea and thinks it's all cute.	
32		But I also think, as Jodi said, I think it's great in the respect of	
33		social skills but I believe that's of a certain age.	
34	Female ③	I used to like childcare when I put my babies in there which was	
35		cumulatively eight years ago now but I think it's changed a lot	
36		since then. Back then you did have to be diploma-trained to be a	
37		group leader in a room. Now, all you've got to be is signed up at	
38		TAFE. And I disagree with that. If I had a baby right now, I would	
39		use it at a needs base. But if I had a three-year-old, it would be	
40		used as a social base. It would be. It depends what you're using it	
41		for but I don't like the way they train them now.	
42	Female ④	And again, a bit of boldness, I see how in society people definitely	
43		need access to childcare with needing two incomes for mortgages	
44		and just current livelihood but, again, I – in light of research and	
45		children's brain development and things like that – I'm actually	
46		probably a little more against that. I think it's actually more	
47		important to have them in there from that six weeks of age to three	
48		years of age, for the mere fact... SIGN HERE 	
49		But again, it needs to – the parent, it's on the parents to really	
50		check out the childcare centre where their children are going and	
51		make sure they are university-trained, qualified people that know	
52		what they're doing. It all comes down to the parents taking on – SIGN HERE 	

pacific solutions

PO Box 745 Indooroopilly QLD 4068 AUSTRALIA 1300 662 173 or +61 7 3378 2668

Email enquiries@pacificsolutions.com.au Web www.pacificsolutions.com.au



Appendix I

Extract of Transcript from Focus Group 3

group_3cnos.docx

Page 2 of 20

- 18 Female 2: Yes. I don't think parents in this day and age have the time and
19 don't understand the importance of it - to be able to spend time
20 with their children to develop those skills for later on in life - in child
21 care - if they were to do that
- 22 Female 3: I believe child care is important for parents, just because at the
23 moment you need to be out there - both parents working - to
24 actually get by. I also think it's important as a foundation for
25 children who weren't moving through the years especially into
26 school years later on - socialisation. I also think it's important for it
27 to be seen as an early years foundation education program and
28 not just a child care program.
- 29 Female 4: I think child care is a facility where children are able to start the
30 basis of their learning and development at a young age which
31 continues throughout school especially with social interaction and
32 things like that - that children can really get in and start that from a
33 young age, whereas they might have a little bit more trouble if
34 they, like myself, don't experience child care.
- 35 Facilitator: To each of you what do you think child care is like - what do you
36 think it's like?
- 37 Female 1: Back from the child's perspective?
- 38 Facilitator: I'm a person who knows very little about child care, so I'm asking
39 you what it's like - what is the child care experience like?
- 40 Female 3: I think you have very diverse experiences while you're in child care
41 - every day is different. The families are from very diverse
42 backgrounds so you're getting a number of different influences into
43 the day that the children are experiencing and you're experiencing.
44 Each day is different and as an educator you have to be flexible
45 within that. You have to go with how the children are feeling. The
46 children have to maintain their flexibility as well and I think that's
47 key to development later on as well. The environment is also I feel
48 - when I walk into a centre I want it to be along the lines of a family
49 and a team environment not an individual's ideas and thoughts in
50 the centre. It should be a family orientated place because you

**pacific
solutions**

PO Box 745, Invercargill 9110 4388 4161-4411A 1300 FREE 173 or 461 / 33/35 2588
Email info@pacificsolutions.com.au Web www.pacificsolutions.com.au

Appendix J

Participant Information and Consent Form

	PARTICIPANT INFORMATION for QUT RESEARCH PROJECT
---	---

“Producing and Maintaining Professional Identities in Early Childhood Education and Care”
--

Research Team Contacts	
Megan Gibson (Lecturer, School of Early Childhood; PhD candidate) Phone: 3813 8092 Email: ml.gibson@qut.edu.au	Dr Felicity McArdle (Senior Lecturer, School of Early Childhood; Principal Supervisor) Phone: 3813 3567 Email: f.mcardle@qut.edu.au

Description

This project is being undertaken as part of a Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD) research project by Megan Gibson. The project is not receiving any funding. Access to data obtained during the project will be limited to the research contacts as well as the Associate Supervisor, Professor Caroline Hatcher, who teaches in the Graduate School of Business, QUT.

The purpose of this project is to research into the professional identities of pre-service teachers in early childhood education and care, particularly in regard to child care. Data for the project will be collected in two ways. Firstly, a number of documents, policies and initiatives will be considered. Secondly, focus groups with pre-service teachers and interviews with academic staff will be conducted.

The research team requests your assistance as a current or previous member of staff within the School of Early Childhood, with particular involvement in pre-service teacher course development and/or child care field studies unit development, EDB013 Field Studies 3: Diversity and Inclusivity. It is anticipated that your input will provide valuable data that will inform the research.

It is envisaged that this research will provide understandings of work in the early childhood profession, in particular child care, and inform future course development in early childhood education and care (ECEC). Therefore your participation will potentially shape future considerations in ECEC.

Participation

Your participation in this project is voluntary. If you do agree to participate, you can withdraw from participation at any time during the project without comment or penalty. Your decision to participate will in no way impact upon your current or future relationship with QUT.

Your participation will involve participating in one to two 30-60 minute semi-structured interviews during June-July 2009. You will be sent an interview schedule one week prior to the interview. All interviews will be audio recorded. Interviews will take place at a convenient location on campus (eg: staff office space or meeting room); or for participants off campus via e-mail, with a follow up telephone interview.

Expected benefits

It is expected that this project will benefit you in terms of insights into the complexities of early childhood teacher professional identities.

Risks

There are no risks beyond normal day-to-day living associated with your participation in this project.

Confidentiality

All comments and responses are anonymous and will be treated confidentially. The names of individual persons will not be identifiable in data and pseudonyms will be used. Audio recordings will be transcribed and stored in a locked filing cabinet until the end of the research project.

Consent to Participate

The return of the completed attached Consent Form is accepted as an indication of your consent to participate in this project.

Questions / further information about the project

Please contact the researcher team members named above to have any questions answered or if you require further information about the project.

Concerns / complaints regarding the conduct of the project

QUT is committed to researcher integrity and the ethical conduct of research projects. However, if you do have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the project you may contact the QUT Research Ethics Officer on 3138 2340 or ethicscontact@qut.edu.au. The Research Ethics Officer is not connected with the research project and can facilitate a resolution to your concern in an impartial manner.



CONSENT FORM for QUT RESEARCH PROJECT

“Producing and Maintaining Professional Identities in Early Childhood Education and Care”

Statement of consent

By signing below, you are indicating that you:

- have read and understood the information document regarding this project
- have had any questions answered to your satisfaction
- understand that if you have any additional questions you can contact the research team
- understand that you are free to withdraw at any time, without comment or penalty
- understand that you can contact the Research Ethics Officer on 3138 2340 or ethicscontact@qut.edu.au if you have concerns about the ethical conduct of the project
- agree to participate in the project
- understand that the project will include audio recording

Name

.....

Signature

.....

Date

..... / /

Appendix K

Human Ethics Approval Certificate



University Human Research Ethics Committee
HUMAN ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE
NHMRC Registered Committee Number EC00171

Dear Ms Megan Gibson

A UHREC should clearly communicate its decisions about a research proposal to the researcher and the final decision to approve or reject a proposal should be communicated to the researcher in writing. This Approval Certificate serves as your written notice that the proposal has met the requirements of the *National Statement on Research Involving Human Participation* and has been approved on that basis. You are therefore authorized to commence activities as outlined in your proposal application, subject to any specific and standard conditions detailed in this document.

Within this Approval Certificate are:

- * Project Details
- * Participant Details
- * Conditions of Approval (Specific and Standard)

Researchers should report to the UHREC, via the Research Ethics Officer, events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project, including, but not limited to:

- (a) serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants; and
- (b) proposed significant changes in the conduct, the participant profile or the risks of the proposed research.

Further information regarding your ongoing obligations regarding human based research can be found via the Research Ethics website <http://www.research.qut.edu.au/ethics/> or by contacting the Research Ethics Coordinator on 07 3138 2340 or ethicscontact@qut.edu.au

If any details within this Approval Certificate are incorrect please advise Research Ethics within 10 days of receipt of this certificate.

Research Ethics Officer
(on behalf of the Chairperson, UHREC)

Date

13/2/2007

Project Details

Category of Approval: Human Ethics Level 1 Confirmed Low Risk by Chair
Approved Until: 13/02/2010
Approval Number: 0700000058
Project Title: Producing and maintaining professional identities in early childhood education and care
Project Chief Investigator: Ms Megan Gibson
Other Project Staff/Students:
Dr Felicity McArdle, A/Prof Caroline Hatcher
Experiment Summary:
Inquiry into preservice teacher professional identities in early childhood education and care (ECE). The production and maintenance of professional identities are complex, contingent and contradictory.

Participant Details

Participants:
Preservice teachers enrolled in EDB013 Child Care Field Studies 3 Diversity and Inclusivity
Location/s of the Work:
QUT



University Human Research Ethics Committee
HUMAN ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE
NHMRC Registered Committee Number EC00171

Conditions of Approval

Specific Conditions of Approval:

No special conditions placed on approval by the UHREC. Standard conditions apply.

Standard Conditions of Approval:

The University's standard conditions of approval require the research team to:

1. Conduct the project in accordance with University policy, NHMRC / AVCC guidelines and regulations, and the provisions of any relevant State / Territory or Commonwealth regulations or legislation;
2. Respond to the requests and instructions of the University Human Research Ethics Committee (UHREC);
3. Advise the Research Ethics Officer immediately if any complaints are made, or expressions of concern are raised, in relation to the project;
4. Suspend or modify the project if the risks to participants are found to be disproportionate to the benefits, and immediately advise the Research Ethics Officer of this action;
5. Stop any involvement of any participant if continuation of the research may be harmful to that person, and immediately advise the Research Ethics Officer of this action;
6. Advise the Research Ethics Officer of any unforeseen development or events that might affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project;
7. Report on the progress of the approved project at least annually, or at intervals determined by the Committee;
8. (Where the research is publicly or privately funded) publish the results of the project in such a way to permit scrutiny and contribute to public knowledge; and
9. Ensure that the results of the research are made available to the participants.

Modifying your Ethical Clearance:

The University has an expedited mechanism for the approval of minor modifications to an ethical clearance (this includes changes to the research team, subject pool, testing instruments, etc). In practice this mechanism enables researchers to conduct a number of projects under the same ethical clearance.

Any proposed modification to the project or variation to the ethical clearance must be reported immediately to the Committee (via the Research Ethics Officer), and cannot be implemented until the Chief Investigator has been notified of the Committee's approval for the change / variation.

Requests for changes / variations should be made in writing to the Research Ethics Officer. Minor changes (changes to the subject pool, the use of an additional instrument, etc) will be assessed on a case by case basis and interim approval may be granted subject to ratification at the subsequent meeting of the Committee.

It generally takes 7 -14 days to process and notify the Chief Investigator of the outcome of a request for a minor change / variation.

Major changes to your project must also be made in writing and will be considered by the UHREC. Depending upon the nature of your request, you may be asked to submit a new application form for your project.

Audits:

All active ethical clearances are subject to random audit by the UHREC, which will include the review of the signed consent forms for participants, whether any modifications / variations to the project have been approved, and the data storage arrangements.

End of Document